

An aerial night photograph of Los Angeles. In the foreground, the Walt Disney Concert Hall is illuminated, showing its iconic undulating, metallic facade. The building's complex geometry is highlighted by warm interior and exterior lighting. Behind it, the dense urban landscape of downtown Los Angeles is visible, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings glowing with city lights. The sky is a deep twilight blue, and the overall scene captures the vibrant energy of the city at night.

Los Angeles Times

# GRAND AMBITION

How a gleaming cultural hub changed Los Angeles

Eli Broad's  
40 years on  
Grand Avenue

The best in  
music, art and  
architecture



G  
THE GRAND  
OPENING  
2021



THE GRAND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Designed by Frank Gehry and located on Grand Avenue across from the Walt Disney Concert Hall and The Broad Museum, The Grand offers a dynamic mix of shopping, dining and entertainment centered around great public space, featuring an Equinox Hotel® and distinct residential opportunities.

We are forever grateful to Eli Broad, the godfather of Grand Avenue, for his vision and leadership. And we proudly salute the Los Angeles Grand Avenue Authority for making DTLA a thriving destination.

@TheGrandLA



Above: Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times; cover photo: Travis Geske For The Times

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# PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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Follow the history of a neighborhood — and a street — that has become an arts hub for L.A. and the world. **PAGE 8**

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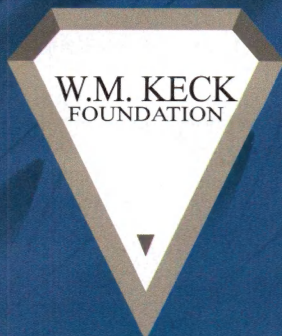
Read more about Grand Avenue and Bunker Hill at  
[latimes.com/grandavenue](http://latimes.com/grandavenue)

**CONGRATULATIONS,  
EDYTHE AND ELI BROAD,**  
on realizing your vision for  
the transformation of  
Grand Avenue.

**We admire your leadership in so many  
civic endeavors throughout Los Angeles.**

The W.M. Keck Foundation is a proud contributor to  
Grand Avenue's transformation through our grant to  
build and support the Children's Amphitheatre  
at Disney Concert Hall.

**THANK YOU**  
to the dedicated government,  
philanthropic and individual partners  
who have made this historic  
contribution to our City!



The **W.M. Keck Foundation** seeks to generate far-reaching benefits for humanity by supporting pioneering discoveries in science, engineering and medicine, and, in Southern California, arts, education, health and community service projects that enrich the lives of children, youth and families.



Katie Falkenberg Los Angeles Times

# City of angels, city of culture

By Norman Pearlstine  
Executive Editor

I first learned last December that Eli Broad was writing a 40-year history of Grand Avenue. He wanted to show how the development of a few blocks on Bunker Hill had transformed Los Angeles, helping it to become one of the world's great cultural capitals.

Although the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum had opened in the 1960s, Broad said he wanted to show how the addition of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Broad museum helped make Grand Avenue a destination for millions of residents and tourists alike.

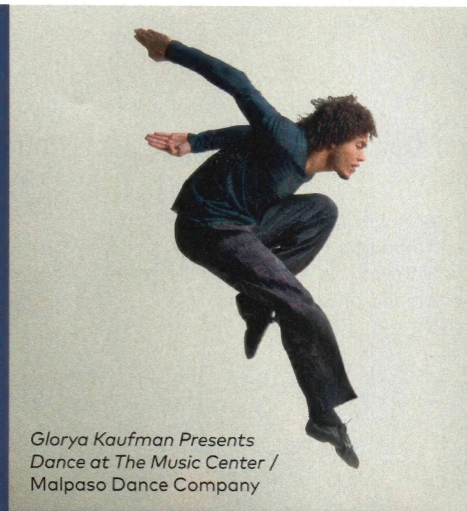
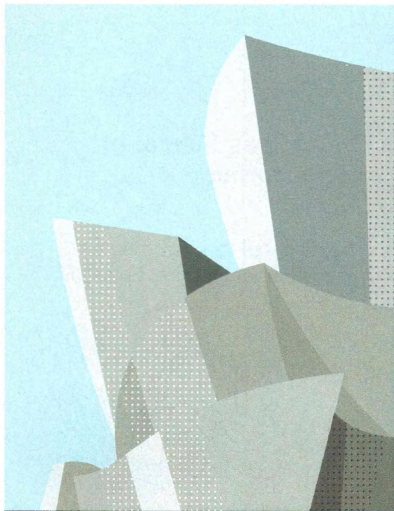
I had known about Broad's many business accomplishments, having first met and written an article for the Wall Street Journal about him in 1969. A trained accountant, he had already established what would become KB Home Corp., one of the nation's most innovative home builders, and soon after, he acquired Sun Life Insurance of America. After converting Sun into a retirement savings company, he sold it to American International Group in 1999.

Since then Broad and his wife, Edythe, have immersed themselves in philanthropy. The Broad Foundation supports entrepreneurship in education, science and the arts, whereas the Broad Institute funds biomedical and genomic research at MIT and Harvard.

It was only after reading his history of Grand Avenue, however, that I came to appreciate how much of Broad's time and energy have been devoted to the arts in Los Angeles. We were delighted when he agreed to let us publish his piece as the centerpiece of a report about Grand Avenue.

Other pieces include a Bunker Hill timeline from the 19th century to today; articles by Times critics Mark Swed, Christopher Knight and Carolina A. Miranda; an architectural assessment of Grand Avenue from critic Justin Davidson; a guide for viewing art from Times staff writer Deborah Vankin; and a report on the Grand, the Related Cos.' \$1-billion shopping, entertainment, hotel and residential project, designed by Frank Gehry. (Construction on the project began in February.) Times photographers Jay L. Clendenin and Kent Nishimura spent hour after hour in pursuit of the best light and angles to illustrate the art palaces on Grand Avenue and the people who helped make them happen.

My thanks go to all these contributors, and to Alice Short, a senior Times editor who supervised the report; Michael Whitley, assistant managing editor for design; deputy design director Kelli Sullivan; and director of photography Mary Cooney.



Glorya Kaufman Presents  
Dance at The Music Center /  
Malpaso Dance Company



Student Matinees



The Music Center's Dance DTLA

## Meet The Music Center of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

As one of the nation's largest performing arts centers, The Music Center is a cultural anchor in Los Angeles County. Our programming engine, The Music Center Arts (TMC Arts), convenes artists, communities and ideas to deepen the cultural lives of all. TMC Arts reflects the diverse voices and interests of the many communities of Los Angeles. The Music Center is both the home and the force behind some of the most creative expression today.

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Top photo by Nir Arieli.



Illustrations by Down The Street Designs

# Along Grand Avenue

## Music Center

135 N. Grand Ave.

Dorothy Buffum Chandler, wife of Norman Chandler (publisher of the Los Angeles Times from 1945-60), was the driving force behind the campaign to raise money for a major performing arts facility in Los Angeles. The first building to be completed, in 1964, would become the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. The Music Center also includes the Ahmanson Theatre, Mark Taper Forum and Walt Disney Concert Hall. Its resident companies are the Center Theatre Group, L.A. Master Chorale, L.A. Opera and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. If you're looking to see a play or hear music, you're in luck. But the Music Center also sponsors dance events, arts education and various programs at Grand Park.

## Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels

555 W. Temple St.

In 1996, Cardinal Roger M. Mahony announced that he wanted to build a Roman Catholic cathedral in downtown Los Angeles. Designed by José Rafael Moneo of Spain, it was dedicated in 2002.

## Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts

450 N. Grand Ave.

The public high school, part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, opened in September 2009.

## The Broad

221 S. Grand Ave.

In 2010, Eli Broad announced he would build a downtown museum for his art collection and hired New York architecture firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro to make it happen. It opened in 2015 with 50,000 square feet of galleries. Art highlights include works by Andy Warhol, Keith Haring and Yayoi Kusama, whose "Infinity Mirrored Room — The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away" is the museum's most Instagrammed work. Did someone say "selfies"? Check out Jeff Koons' "Tulips" and "Balloon Dog (Blue)."

## Museum of Contemporary Art

250 S. Grand Ave.

MOCA was established in 1979; its Temporary Contemporary (now the Geffen Contemporary) opened in Little Tokyo in 1983. The Grand Avenue building, designed by architect Arata Isozaki, opened in 1986. The museum has more than 7,000 works from the 1940s on, including one of the largest collections of Mark Rothko works in the country. Art highlights include works by Franz Kline, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Gordon Matta-Clark, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Mike Kelley.

## Grand Park

200 N. Grand Ave.

The 12-acre park, which stretches from Grand Avenue to City Hall, opened in 2012. Upcoming events on the park schedule include a July 4 block party.

## Walt Disney Concert Hall

111 S. Grand Ave.

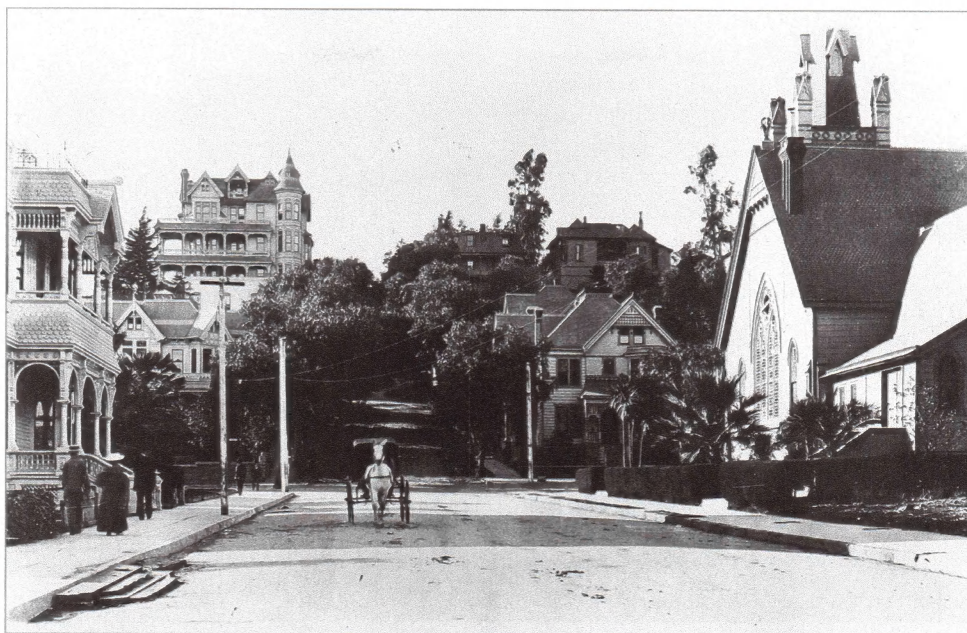
One of four Music Center venues, Walt Disney Concert Hall was designed by Frank Gehry and completed in 2003. (REDCAT, or Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater, is tucked into the southwest corner of the hall.) Celebrated for its architecture and acoustic sophistication, it is the home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the L.A. Master Chorale. It is also the home of a beautiful, elevated garden, described by writer Emily Green as "an Impressionist painting come to life."

## Colburn School

200 S. Grand Ave.

The Colburn School of performing arts opened in 1998, next door to the Museum of Contemporary Art. Last year, architect Frank Gehry was selected to design a campus extension, including a 1,100-seat concert hall.





# The history of Bunker Hill's improbable evolution

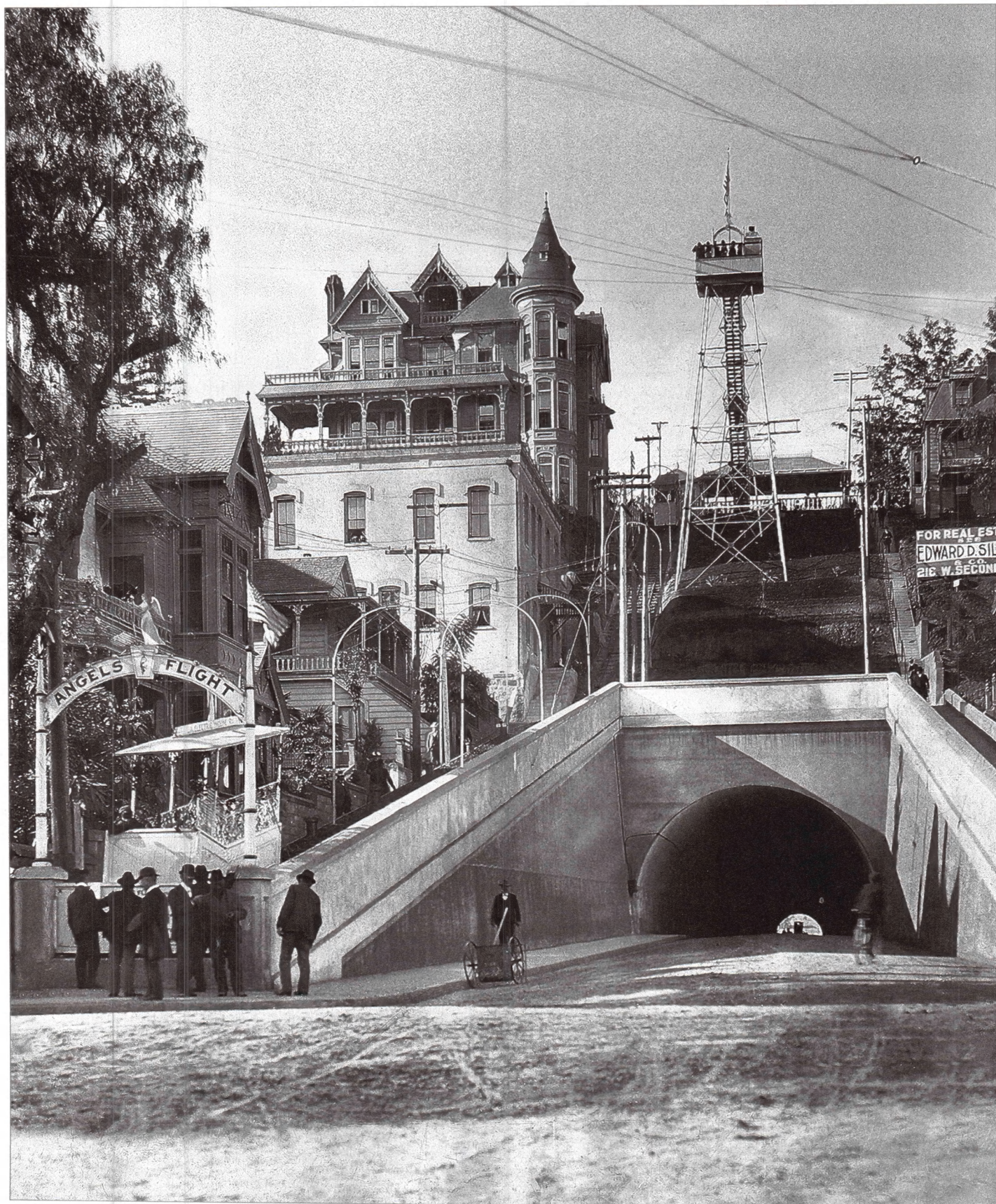
Grand Avenue is home to a cluster of architectural and artistic achievements (museums, concert venues, theaters) that attract millions of people a year, locals and tourists whose energy carries the promise of a vibrant urban center on Bunker Hill.

But much of what we have come to associate with Grand Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood is relatively recent history. The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion opened in 1964; MOCA was founded in 1979; the Walt Disney Concert Hall opened its doors in 2003, followed 12 years later by the Broad.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the area was sparsely populated. Starting in the mid-19th century, Bunker Hill started to attract the attention of developers who worked to transform it into a fashionable neighborhood. Later, it transformed again — into a vibrant area that was home for thousands of working-class Angelenos in need of moderate or low-income housing.

In the middle of the 20th century, government officials declared the neighborhood a slum — which led to razing, scraping and, ultimately, the wave of redevelopment and development that brought us the string of office buildings and arts institutions that now line the avenue.

Much was lost — and gained — in those intervening years. Tunnels opened to new areas of the city. Angels Flight transported us. Mansions were constructed and then torn down or moved. Palaces of art emerged on the leveled earth. Let our timeline of Bunker Hill and Grand Avenue remind — or inform — you of some of the details of this transformation.



Los Angeles Times

**1901:** Angels Flight, a funicular at the corner of 3rd and Hill streets, on Dec. 31, its opening day. Originally a way for the elites who lived in mansions atop Bunker Hill to get to and from their offices — and for their servants to get to and from the markets — Angels Flight was closed between 1969 and 1996, when California Plaza was built, then more recently during two prolonged periods for safety reasons — 2001 to 2010 and 2013 to 2017. “Dubbed the shortest railway in the world,” it has recently generated renewed interest as an attraction, thanks to films such as “La La Land.”



UCLA special collections

**1886:** Los Angeles Normal School opens. Established in 1881, the school was the teacher training institution that, under the direction of Ernest C. Moore, became the Southern Branch of the University of California in 1919. The building stood on the site of the present-day L.A. Central Library.

## 19th century

**1850:** California becomes the 31st state in the U.S. Los Angeles is incorporated into a municipality.

**1870s:** A French Canadian immigrant named Prudent Beaudry buys 20 acres in what is now downtown Los Angeles, hoping to turn the land into a successful real estate development. In the next few years it becomes a fashionable residential neighborhood with mansions and luxury hotels. As part of the development process, he builds systems to deliver water and a series of streets, one of which is named Bunker Hill Avenue in honor of the 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill. Eventually it becomes the name of the neighborhood.

**1882:** Los Angeles Normal School, created to train teachers, opens on a site that is now the home of L.A. Central Library. It is demolished in 1924.

**1880-90s:** More mansions and hotels are constructed, including the Melrose, at 138 S. Grand, first built as a private residence and later converted to a hotel.

**1887:** Grand Avenue is officially launched when the City Council renames Charity Street.

**Late 1880s:** The Castle, a 20-room mansion with a "magnificent stained-glass front door," is built at 325 S. Bunker Hill Ave. Eventually, it becomes a boarding house. Nearby, a house called the Salt Box is constructed at 339 S. Bunker Hill Ave. Decades later, they are famously photographed — in front of the towering Union Bank Building — after most of the neighborhood has been torn down or bulldozed. The images of these Victorian-era structures become a memorable entry in the history of Bunker Hill.

**1898:** The city of Los Angeles gets its first symphony orchestra.

## 1900-40

**1900:** The heyday of Bunker Hill as a fashionable enclave is over, as wealthy Angelenos leave for more prestigious neighborhoods. Residents in search of low-income housing move into some of the old Victorian mansions that have been converted into boarding houses.

**1901:** Angels Flight, a funicular, opens, moving passengers between the business district and Bunker Hill.

**1901:** The 3rd Street tunnel opens.

**1902:** The elegant Fremont Hotel, named after politician/explorer/soldier John C. Fremont, opens on the corner of Olive and 4th streets with about 100 rooms. It is torn down in 1955.

**1924:** The 2nd Street tunnel opens.

**1926:** The Central Library is constructed.

**1928:** Los Angeles City Hall opens.

**1931:** A group of "realty experts" submits to the city a plan to raze Bunker Hill properties and re-grade the hill at a cost of \$24 million, using public funds and leasing portions of the land to private developers.

## 1940-60

**1940s:** More Bunker Hill mansions are converted to rooming houses.

**1942:** In "The High Window," Raymond Chandler assesses the neighborhood: "Bunker Hill is old town, lost town, shabby town, crook town. Once, very long ago, it was the choice residential district of the city, and there are still standing a few of the jigsaw Gothic mansions.... They are all rooming houses now, their parquet floors are scratched and worn through the once glossy finish and the wide sweeping staircases are



Boris Yaro Los Angeles Times

**1968:** Two Victorian mansions, the Castle and the Salt Box, sit on Bunker Hill on Dec. 26, awaiting their move. The houses rolled off the hill just as the new skyscrapers began to rise. The historic buildings were moved to Heritage Square, where they burned down just weeks after arriving.

dark with time and with cheap varnish laid on over generations of dirt."

**1945:** California's Community Redevelopment Law enables cities to use eminent domain to condemn and tear down dilapidated districts and encourage new development.

**1948:** The city of Los Angeles establishes its own Community Redevelopment Agency.

**1949:** President Harry S. Truman signs the Federal Housing Act. The legislation, Truman says, "opens up the prospect of decent homes in wholesome surroundings for low-income families now living in the squalor of the slums." In truth, the act helps agencies acquire "blighted" areas of Bunker Hill, land that is cleared and redeveloped. Critics point out that it ruins established residential neighborhoods.

**1956:** The CRA presents a tentative plan (including "luxurious apartment-hotels ... along with smaller apartments for middle-income families and 13-story apartment buildings for single office workers") to redevelop 135 acres of the Bunker Hill area "classified by local and federal authorities as a slum and substandard housing area," according to a report in the Los Angeles Times.

**1959:** The city of Los Angeles adopts the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project. According to *Curbed Los Angeles*, "The redevelop-



Los Angeles Times

**1950s:** Cliffside hotels dot Bunker Hill. The city's Community Redevelopment Agency studied how to redevelop 135 acres of the Bunker Hill neighborhood "classified by local and federal authorities as a slum and substandard housing area," according to a Los Angeles Times report.



# WE PUT THEATRE AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL.

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ment project adopted by the city on March 31, 1959, grew out of an urban revival movement sweeping the nation and kick-started by federal housing acts that offered aid for the clearing of 'urban blight.' Opponents slowed it down but couldn't stop it. "Six-thousand residents, mostly poor people and senior citizens eligible for public housing, were relocated outside of the area; the promised replacement affordable housing never materialized."

## 1960-80

**1963:** A "razing program" underway for 2 ½ years makes Bunker Hill a patchwork of vacant lots and gaping parcels.

**1964:** Memorial Pavilion, the first building of the Music Center, opens in December (it will eventually be re-christened as the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion). First-week performances include the Count Basie Orchestra, Van Cliburn and Frank Sinatra.

**1965:** L.A. County Board of Supervisors names the Music Center buildings — the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre.

**1966:** First phase of the Los Angeles Civic Center Mall is dedicated — a \$6.9-million segment between Grand Avenue and Hill Street between the courthouse and the Hall of Administration. A central feature is the Arthur J. Will Memorial Fountain, which is retained in the redesign years later of Grand Park.

**1967:** The Mark Taper Forum opens on April 9, with the controversial presentation of John Whiting's "The Devils," dramatized from Aldous Huxley's famous factual study, "The Devils of Loudun," and staged by Gordon Davidson.

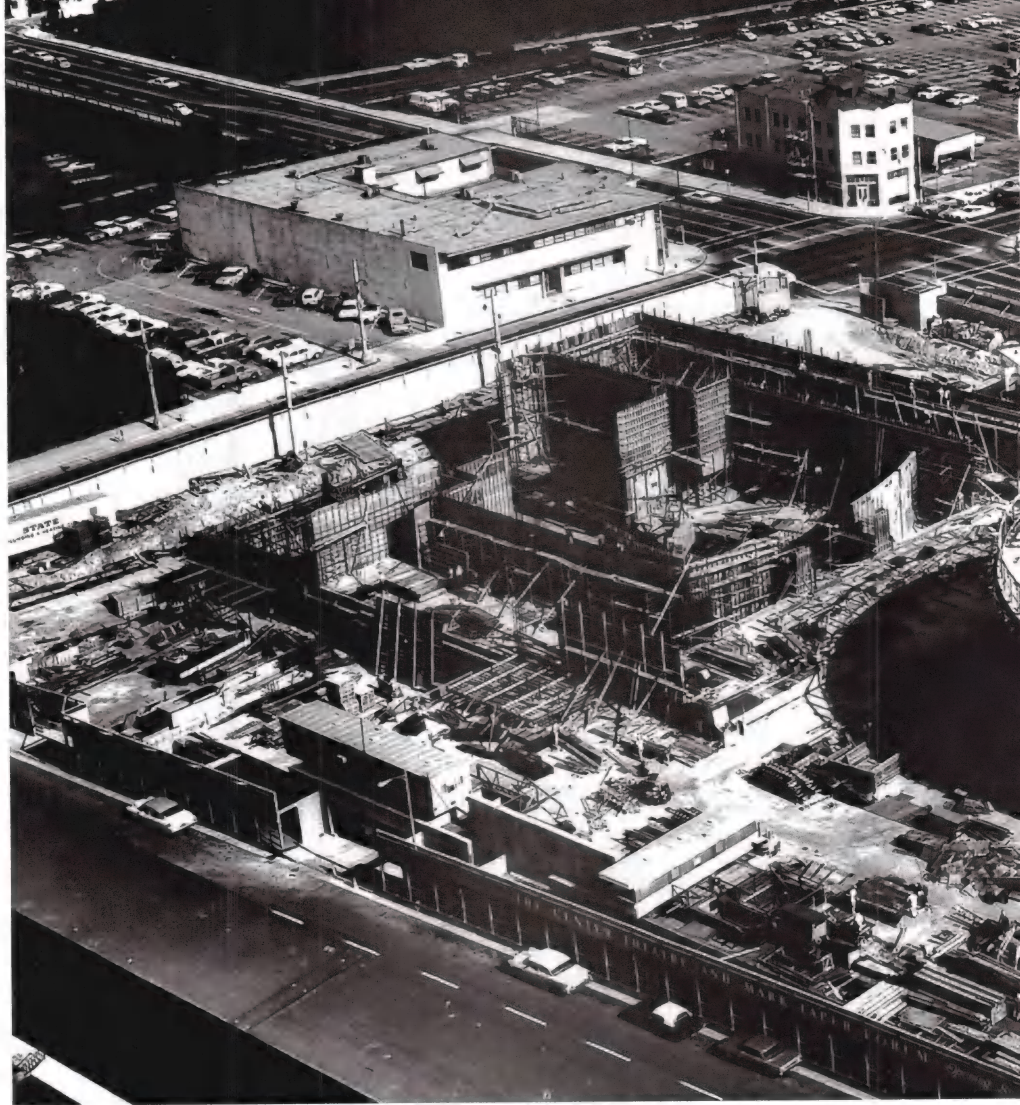
**1967:** Inaugural performances of "Man of La Mancha" open the Ahmanson Theatre in April.

**1967:** The newly formed Los Angeles Music Center Opera Assn. commits to bringing the principal New York City Opera company, not the traveling company, for a month-long engagement to perform at the Music Center. That arrangement continues for 16 years.

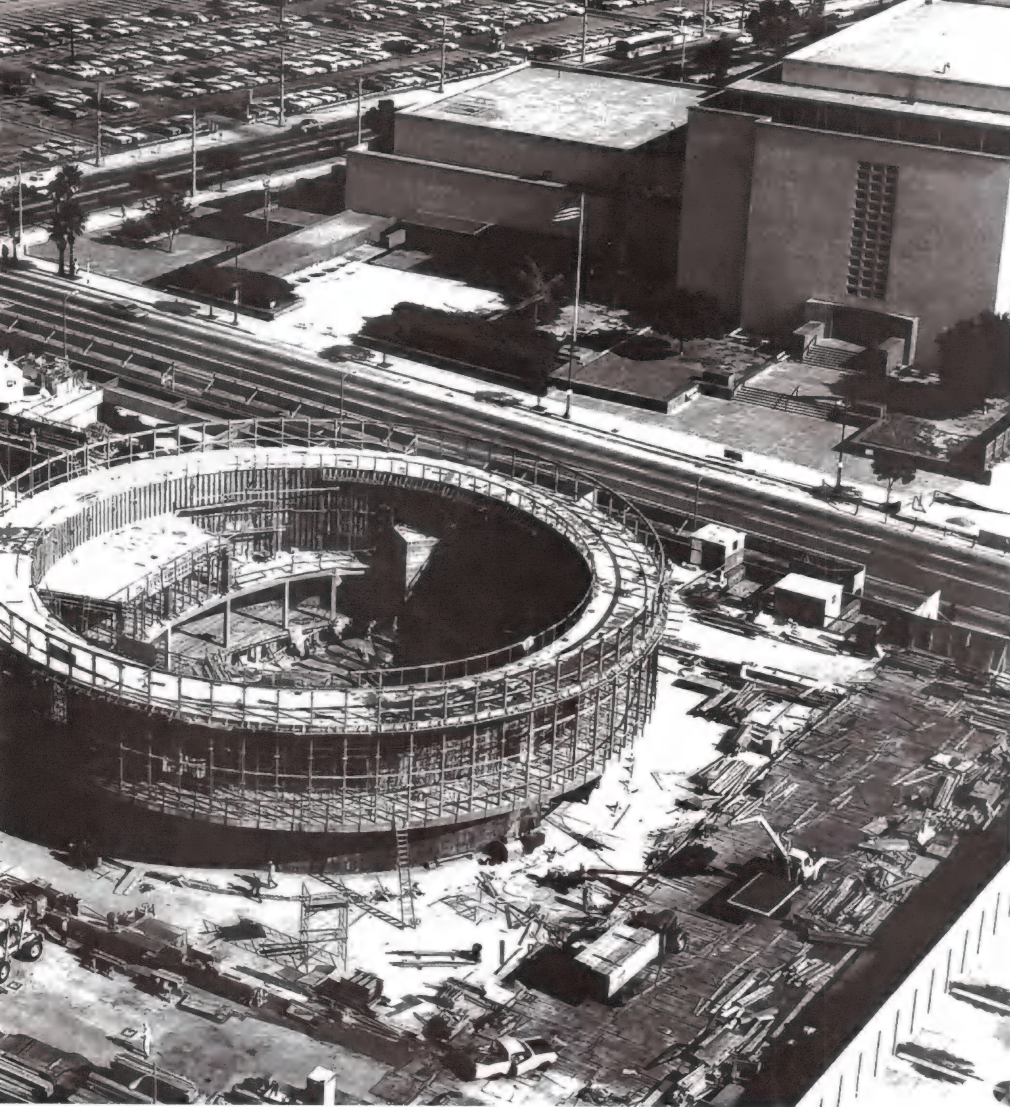
**1969:** The CRA dismantles Angels Flight and puts it in storage, in preparation for the development of the California Plaza office complex on Grand Avenue.

**1969:** The Academy Awards are held for first time — and broadcast worldwide for the first time — at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. The best picture is "Oliver!"

**1969:** "Erector set" parking lot opens with 1,062 spaces at the corner of 1st and Olive streets, backing onto the length of Grand Avenue. It was often cited as one of Los Angeles' most reviled structures, but at the time, the designer, engineer Charles Bentley, was marketing what he called a "revolutionary concept": a low-cost portable parking structure that could be erected in a matter of weeks



**1964:** Above, Dorothy Buffum Chandler at the opening of the Memorial Pavilion at the Music Center. Top, construction of the building that would later be rechristened the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.



over an existing lot and taken down and moved as land uses changed. It will be torn down in 2018 as plans proceed for a \$1-billion Frank Gehry-designed mixed-use development, scheduled for completion in 2021.

**1969:** The last two Victorian houses on Bunker Hill (the Castle and the Salt Box) are moved. They are to be the first structures in a new Heritage Square in Montecito Heights. On Oct. 9, both structures are destroyed in an arson fire.

**1979:** The Museum of Contemporary Art is officially founded. The CRA makes building a "Los Angeles Museum of Modern Art" a condition of the huge Bunker Hill Project (later known as California Plaza), requiring that 1.5% of the total cost must go into the museum building.

## 1980-2000

**1980:** MOCA continues the process of assembling an international board of trustees, including Dominique de Menil, who goes on to create the Menil Collection in Houston; Peter Ludwig from Germany; Italian lawyer Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo; Seiji Tsutsumi from Japan; and L.A. artists Robert Irwin and Sam Francis.

**1981:** Japanese architect Arata Isozaki is selected to design the Museum of Contemporary Art on Grand Avenue.

**1983:** Public opening of MOCA's Temporary Contemporary is celebrated in Little Tokyo. The inaugural show is "The First Show: Painting and Sculpture From Eight Collections 1940-1980."

**1984:** With a budget of just \$6.4 million, Peter Hemmings becomes the first executive general director of Music Center Opera (later renamed Los Angeles Opera), mounting five productions at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in a first season (launched two years later) that immediately makes the operatic world take notice.

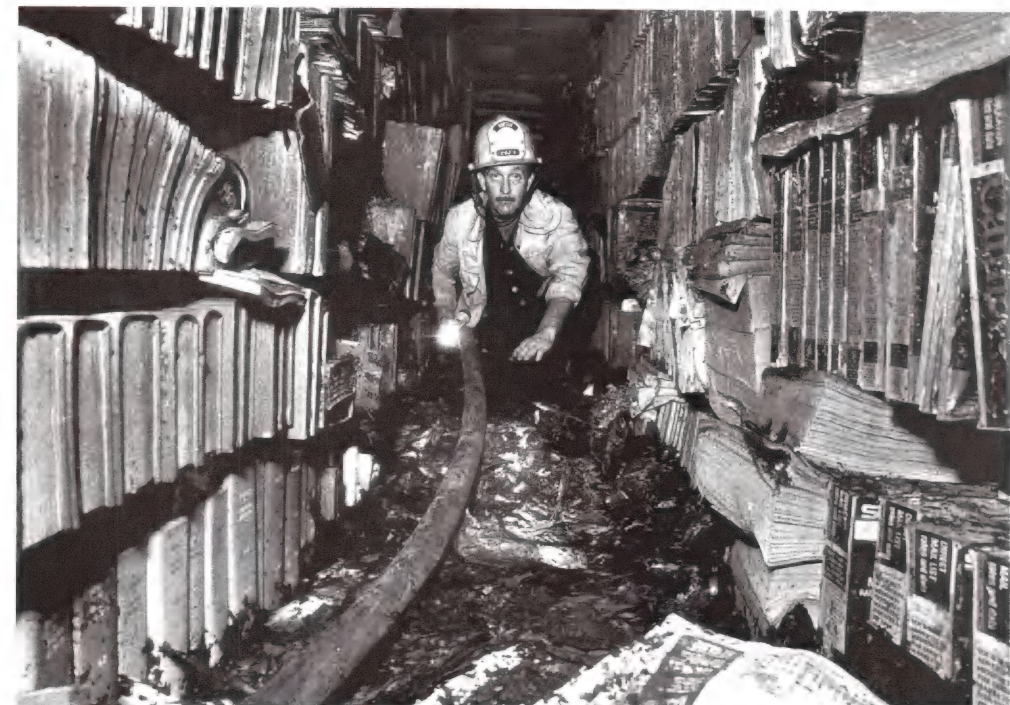
**1985:** Tower 1 of California Plaza, a 1-million-square-foot, 42-story, \$200-million building at 300 S. Grand Ave., is completed.

**1986:** An arson fire guts the Central Library, destroying 400,000 books and damaging another 700,000. Damages are estimated at \$22 million, more than \$50 million in today's dollars.

**1986:** Music Center Opera (later L.A. Opera) opens its inaugural season in October with Verdi's "Otello," starring Plácido Domingo.

**1986:** Arata Isozaki's \$23-million MOCA opens on Grand Avenue in December, with "Individuals," an ambitious survey of contemporary art, from Abstract to Neo-Expressionism in 400 works by 77 artists. (Isozaki is awarded the Pritzker Prize in 2019.)

**1987:** Lillian Disney, widow of Walt Disney, offers initial \$50 million to create what will become Walt Disney Concert Hall.



Music Center Archives, top; Life magazine, left; Boris Yaro Los Angeles Times, above

**1986:** A devastating fire at Los Angeles Central Library destroyed hundreds of thousands of books. The blaze, ruled arson, was recently the subject of Susan Orlean's bestselling book "The Library."



Liz O. Baylen Los Angeles Times

**1998:** The Colburn School is dedicated. With a focus on music, dance and drama, the school prepares students for careers in the performing arts, and provides the community access to performances and educational activities on campus and at other venues across the city. In 2007, the school expanded, doubling its size with a \$120-million, 12-story structure adjacent to its Grand Avenue headquarters.

**1988:** Frank Gehry is selected to build Walt Disney Concert Hall. (In 1989, Gehry is awarded the Pritzker Prize.)

**1990:** U.S. Bank Tower opens, at the time the tallest (73 stories) building on the West Coast. Originally called Library Tower, it is part of a city-approved project to allow a developer to build two skyscrapers in exchange for a guarantee to fund the renovation and expansion of the Central Library, which was gutted by fire in 1986.

**1991:** Frank Gehry unveils the final shape of his Disney Hall design. The estimated price tag is \$110 million, but the final cost is more than double the estimate.

**1992:** Esa-Pekka Salonen becomes music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

**1992:** Tower 2 of California Plaza, a \$326-million, 52-story skyscraper, is completed.

**1994:** Construction on Walt Disney Concert

Hall is stopped by officials so they can study ways to manage spiraling costs.

**1996:** Eli Broad and Mayor Richard Riordan step in to launch a new fundraising effort for Disney Concert Hall. The final cost is estimated at \$255 million.

**1996:** Angels Flight is reopened, close to its original location, by a nonprofit group after being closed for 27 years.

**1996:** Cardinal Roger M. Mahony announces he wants to construct a Roman Catholic cathedral on a large county-owned plot of land in downtown Los Angeles between the county's Hall of Administration on Temple Street and the Hollywood Freeway. Jose Rafael Moneo of Madrid, a Pritzker laureate, is named the architect.

**1997:** Frank Gehry threatens to quit the Walt Disney Concert Hall project after Eli Broad and Mayor Richard Riordan support a plan

that will take the job of completing the working drawings for Disney Hall out of the hands of the architect's firm. After an intervention by Diane Disney Miller, Gehry agrees to stay on.

**1998:** The Colburn School of performing arts is dedicated at its new home in a \$28-million building alongside MOCA.

**1999:** Construction on Walt Disney Concert Hall begins. Final cost of building estimated at \$274 million.

## 2000-19

**2001:** Los Angeles Unified School District hires the architecture firm A.C. Martin and Partners to prepare a preliminary design for a traditional high school on the site of the district's old headquarters on Grand Avenue. Later in the year, philanthropist Eli Broad proposes a switch to an arts academy.

# BREAK AWAY

FROM THE DAY TO DAY

PLÁCIDO DOMINGO

LA BOHÈME

RENÉE FLEMING

DOVE CAMERON

THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA

JAVIER CAMARENA

PSYCHO

SARAH RUHL

DU YUN

THE MAGIC FLUTE

JAMES CONLON

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

CHRISTIAN LACROIX

LA BOHÈME

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Al Seib Los Angeles Times

**2009:** Central Los Angeles High School No. 9, now the Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, opens in September at 450 N. Grand Ave. The steel-clad \$232-million public high school, part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, was designed by Austrian architect Wolf Prix and his firm Coop Himmelblau after Eli Broad helped to arrange a design competition. The campus includes a 927-seat professional concert hall, a 250-seat black-box theater, an outdoor amphitheater, specialized spaces for art, music and theater classes, and four dance studios.

**2001:** An accident on Angels Flight kills an 83-year-old tourist. It is opened and closed several times — and reopened again in 2017.

**2002:** After Eli Broad helps to arrange a design competition for the proposed LAUSD arts academy at 450 N. Grand Ave., the jury makes its selection in September, announcing Coop Himmelblau as architects for the new high school.

**2002:** The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels is dedicated on Sept. 2. It is the first major American cathedral to be built in three decades.

**2003:** Giese Residence, a bedraggled wooden Queen Anne-style cottage built in 1887, located along West Cesar Chavez Avenue and known as “the last house in Bunker Hill,” is leveled illegally by a developer whose upscale apartment projects won praise for advancing downtown’s residential revival. In 2004, the

developer and city agree to a settlement that includes — among other terms — a penalty to pay the city \$200,000, which will be used to create a fund for low- and moderate-income families living in historic houses.

**2003:** Plácido Domingo becomes general director of Los Angeles Opera.

**2003:** Disney Hall, Frank Gehry’s \$274-million, 2,265-seat hall, opens in October, drawing ecstatic reviews from architecture and music critics across the country. Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the hall’s first concert in front of an audience of politicians, Hollywood players, captains of industry and cultural savants.

**2006:** As costs escalate, the Los Angeles Unified School District board approves a nearly \$172-million construction bid for the new visual arts school on Grand Avenue.

**2007:** L.A. County Board of Supervisors and

the L.A. City Council give final approval to a \$2.05-billion Grand Avenue project, a “sprawling mini-city atop Bunker Hill,” despite criticism about tax breaks and land giveaways. The first phase will be residential towers designed by Frank Gehry.

**2007:** The Colburn School expands with a \$120-million, 12-story structure adjacent to its Grand Avenue headquarters. The expansion more than doubles the school’s size and marks a major step forward in its hopes of becoming the Juilliard of the West.

**2008:** MOCA acknowledges a financial crisis. Museum director Jeremy Strick says the museum is seeking large cash infusions from donors and does not rule out the possibility of merging with another institution or sharing its collection of almost 6,000 artworks.

**2009:** The California attorney general’s office determines that MOCA skirted state



Travis Geske For The Times

**2012:** Grand Park opens in the summer. The 12-acre, \$56-million park, which stretches from the steps of City Hall to the top of Bunker Hill, is a partnership between the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. Part of the larger Grand Avenue project, it has been the site of festivals, holiday celebrations and cultural experiences. In 2013, more than 25,000 people attended a New Year's Eve celebration there.

law for years, contributing to a financial meltdown in late 2008, and orders the museum to hire a consultant to help improve financial management. Overspending and investment losses drained MOCA's investment portfolio from a peak of \$38.2 million in mid-2000 to \$5 million in December 2008. By March 2010, it rebounds to \$14.2 million, fueled largely by fresh donations.

**2009:** Gustavo Dudamel starts his tenure as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic to great critical acclaim. His presence leads to long ticket lines and the rapid growth of "Dudamania" among fans.

**2009:** The steel-clad \$232-million Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts opens in September at 450 N. Grand Ave. Costs soared for the campus, rising ultimately past \$230 million, compared with a 2001 \$87-million estimate for the A.C. Martin version.

**2010:** Adding another contemporary art museum to Grand Avenue, Eli Broad announces that he will house his art collection in a downtown museum and eventually chooses a blue-chip New York architecture firm to design it — Diller Scofidio + Renfro. The announcement surprises some observers who believed Broad would donate his extensive collection to LACMA.

**2012:** The Music Center opens the long-awaited \$56-million Grand Park in partnership with L.A. County. The 12-acre park stretches from Grand Avenue to City Hall.

**2013:** More than 25,000 people attend Grand Park's New Year's Eve celebration.

**2014:** The Music Center celebrates its 50th anniversary.

**2015:** The Broad museum opens in September with 50,000 square feet of galleries.

**2018:** Frank Gehry is selected to design a campus extension for the Colburn School, including a 1,100-seat concert hall.

**2018:** The Los Angeles Philharmonic kicks off its centennial season in the fall.

**2018:** In June, developers propose plans for a mixed-use, 80-story skyscraper by Handel Architects — Angels Landing — on a site at 4th and Hill Streets, originally expected to hold the third office tower in California Plaza.

**2019:** In February, Frank Gehry, government officials and representatives of Related Cos. attend a ground-breaking ceremony for the Grand, the Gehry-designed mixed-use development across Grand Avenue from the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Sources: *Los Angeles Times*, *Curbed LA*, *Discover Los Angeles*, *Water and Power Associates*, *L.A. Forum*, *Los Angeles Downtown News*, *LAist*, *KCET*

# Where music



# carries us to new heights

Over the last half-century, Grand Avenue has energized and enriched the city's music scene, first with the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, then with Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall, and now with the new halls Gehry is designing for the Colburn School.



Cellist Yo-Yo Ma performs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and conductor Gustavo Dudamel at Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2013.

A rehearsal of "Carmen" at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in 2017.



By **MARK SWED**  
Music Critic

**T**o an important degree, Grand Avenue is Music Street.

Not all of it, of course. The bland towers between the Central Library and 3rd Street might appear an affront to music, sitting on land that should have been devoted to the arts. Below 5th Street, Grand Avenue bustles but ceases being grand; it's a place to have dinner before ascending the hill for the street's main purpose.

But everything north of 3rd Street exists because of — and has been involved in some way with — music, which ultimately revived the blight of 1950s Bunker Hill.

The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion — built as a home for the Los Angeles Philharmonic — started it all when it opened in 1964. Actually, it was Dorothy Buffum Chandler, wife of Times publisher Norman Chandler, who started it all a decade earlier. In charge of the newspaper's women's sections and its cultural pages (in those days often lumped together), she led the campaign to save the Hollywood Bowl from bankruptcy in the early 1950s. That gave her a taste for becoming a community arts organizer

and for the L.A. Phil, which, through her support, she came to help manage.

The L.A. Phil had long needed a proper concert hall, having outgrown the architecturally fascinating but acoustically inadequate Philharmonic Auditorium at Olive and 5th streets. Chandler led a historic fundraising campaign, getting pennies from schoolchildren and tearing up \$10,000 checks from celebrities she knew could afford more and whom she shamed into donating \$25,000.

Nor did she hesitate to take advantage of The Times' resources to promote her project. Despite objections that Bunker Hill was too unseemly to be a cultural mecca, Chandler argued that this could be a noble effort at urban renewal. She liked that it was on a hill, believing that an arts institution should be, like a Greek temple, on worship-worthy high ground. That gentrification would be good for Chandler real estate interests in the area didn't hurt.

But she mainly wanted a *music* center. (The Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre, which opened in 1967, were afterthoughts, if enthusiastic ones. The Taper was originally hoped to be a chamber music hall and at first shared its stage with the Los Angeles Chamber

Orchestra, which charmingly played on whatever theater set happened to be up.)

The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, looming most noticeably above the street, set the tone, so to speak, for a newly grand Grand Avenue. The opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art added further arts luster to Grand, even though the elegant Arata Isozaki-designed building was partially hidden from street view. MOCA, moreover, originally presented itself as an unusually music-friendly institution, putting on concerts and music-related exhibitions, the most noteworthy being the unforgettable original John Cage-inspired "Roly-wholyover" in 1993.

Then came the Colburn School, first as a training academy for young musicians and later a full-fledged conservatory. The \$28-million building opened in 1998.

Five years later, Grand Avenue became home to a new L.A. icon — Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall, whose transformative power is now a matter of Southern California — and music — history.

Even the avenue's most recent addition, the Broad museum, couldn't resist the musical pull of Disney. At the moment, it has some of the most imaginative musical programming of any



Los Angeles Times photos: previous page, Wally Skali; above, Gary Coronado; below, Kirk McKoy



The Broad has some of the most imaginative arts programming of any major California museum.



Perched outside the Colburn School are members of the Calder Quartet.

Wally Skalij Los Angeles Times

major California museum.

There have been, of course, missed opportunities on Grand. A plan to continue the cultural reach of the street south of Disney with a dance theater, hotel and other amenities was replaced by lumbering office towers. Gehry's proposal to lower the Music Center to street level and connect it to a fanciful Grand Park was rejected. The Gehry-designed mixed-use development across from Disney Hall stalled for decades.

Now that development is finally being built. The good news for those who fear we could be saddled with a West Coast version of the new Hudson Yards looming like a little Dubai over New York's nearby Chelsea district is that Architecture is on our side. With Gehry's

masterpiece across the street, he can be counted on to find subtle and salient means to inspire a far less commercial character to the development.

But the real secret weapon promises to be a new 1,100-seat concert hall that Gehry is designing as part of an extension to the Colburn School on Olive Street, just behind the new development. It will resemble the recent Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin, the magical small hall that Gehry designed for Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, or WEDO, made up of young Israeli and Arab musicians. The audience sits in the round, with an oval-shaped balcony of only two rows hanging from the ceiling. The connection between musician and listener is as direct as if you were wearing

living headphones. I've never experienced anything like it.

Just as Disney has inspired the L.A. Phil's unprecedented institutional vision, so has the Boulez Saal. While used for student rehearsals and WEDO performances, the venue has imaginative nightly concerts that can be anything from recitals by the world's greatest musicians to a series that features Turkish or other world music. Robert Wilson staged a performance installation around Bach's motets in it. Tickets, no matter what, remain inexpensive, assuming you can snag one.

Moreover, the new Colburn hall will be an anti-Shed. Unlike the flashy massive performance and art installation structure meant to give the sterile Hudson Yards some street cred,

2019/20 SEASON





# LA Phil

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the new Colburn hall will be a hidden jewel inside a Gehry building housing studios and rehearsal space for students and a 700-seat studio for experimental and late-night cabaret, which is exactly what the burgeoning downtown scene needs.

Still, there are troubling questions and caveats. The Colburn School has little practice as a presenting organization. The venturesome Piano Spheres and Monday Evening Concerts at its Zipper Concert Hall are rentals, and Colburn students, faculty and administrators are notorious for not attending. Barenboim brought in a brilliant arts administrator to run the Boulez Saal. Colburn will need the same.

The model might be REDCAT, the CalArts-run black-box theater underneath Disney. It has become, along with UCLA, the primary presenter in town of imaginative theater, music, dance and multimedia events, judiciously including only the most worthwhile and newsworthy CalArts student events. But Mark Murphy, the director for the last 15 years, is now leaving, and the school has yet to offer guarantees that it will follow Murphy's lead.

But the biggest danger is the elephant in the room — or on the avenue. New subway stops are being constructed just down the hill from the new Colburn expansion and next to REDCAT. What could be better? Nothing, if the subway, which will run under Disney, doesn't ruin the hall's acoustics. The county insists that it is making a great effort to make sure vibrations are contained, but such assurances can run hollow.

When Carnegie Hall converted an underground movie theater to a new performance space, Zankel Hall, the New York Metro promised it would slow the nearby subway trains down during performances if they made too much noise. They made too much noise, but the Metro discovered that slowing down trains would throw the entire subway system off its schedule. Now, more than 15 years later, the trains still make too much noise.

In the Bay Area, BART was initially whisper quiet in 1972 when the first trains rolled in. These days the clattering is so loud riders can hardly hear themselves think.

We don't know what the Metro under 2nd Street will sound like, or not sound like, or what kinds of vibrations it will produce. Should we be worried? Gehry is.

At the very least, we decidedly need full oversight. Inspectors must make double sure every rivet is up to silent standards. Infrastructure maintenance will be required for as long as Grand Avenue remains as Music Street — or Gehry Avenue, which is basically the same thing.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group performs at the Colburn School as part of a Green Umbrella concert.

# How one building



Refik Anadol projected a series of images onto Walt Disney Concert Hall in September to mark the Los Angeles Philharmonic's centennial season.

# changed everything

Walt Disney Concert Hall is the cornerstone of a neighborhood's long-promised transformation. Sixteen years after Frank Gehry's masterpiece opened, it's still spinning off energy.







Los Angeles Times photos; previous page, Luis Sinco; above, Wally Skalij; left, Kent Nishimura

Frank Gehry inside Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2013. Gehry designed a new home for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and showed that, every once in a while, a work of architecture can transform all it touches. His Grand Avenue vision continues with construction now underway across the street.

By JUSTIN DAVIDSON

When the Los Angeles Philharmonic launched its centennial season last September, media artist Refik Anadol projected a series of giddy hallucinations onto the facade of Walt Disney Concert Hall: The stainless-steel skin peeled back to reveal its twisting structure, like an X-ray of a dancer in mid-whirl. Musicians, scores, programs, sounds translated into pictures — the orchestra's entire memory, stored in its archives and exploded by algorithm — danced on the building's surfaces. Anadol's public artwork, "WDCH Dreams," was an expression of the architecture's extroverted personality, its ability to reach out into a vast megalopolis with an important message from a palace of high culture: *This is fun!*

Sixteen years after Frank Gehry's marvel opened — and 30 since Lillian Disney made the down payment — Disney Hall is still spinning off energy, and the neighborhood around it is still being born. Now that Gehry's new billion-dollar baby, a cluster of apartment towers called the Grand, is finally starting construction, the 90-year-old architect may yet get to walk around the effervescent urban core he envisioned, with art and music at its center. In the meantime, he's designing another set of

performance spaces for the Colburn School, which will turn this once dour stretch of Grand Avenue into a compendium of late and later Gehry. I'm as impatient as he is.

Grand Avenue has been making grand promises for as long as I can remember, and it has usually failed to deliver. The stretch from California Plaza to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels is an allée of palazzo-sized buildings running along the crest of a ridge, with the city spilling down on both sides, as if L.A. were a Sicilian hill town. Architects have not generally made the most of this setup. In the 1960s, Welton Becket treated the hill as a pedestal for his Music Center, a handy bit of topography under which to stow a massive garage. Two decades later, Arthur Erickson planted a pair of Anywhereville towers on the sunken (and heart-sinking) deck of California Plaza.

Even the most ambitious architectural statements demonstrated a wounding ambivalence toward the idea that a street in downtown L.A. could behave like a ... street. Rafael Moneo's 2002 cathedral gives the avenue a cool concrete shoulder. Arata Isozaki pulled his 1984 Museum of Contemporary Art above, below and away from the sidewalk, as if the public realm were dangerously profane. The red sandstone complex, like a kit of assorted blocks, closes in on itself, a monastery of art struggling to maintain its integrity on a corpo-

rate mountaintop. In the late 1990s, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer contributed Colburn's low-slung patterned-brick box topped by an oversized lantern, a wan response to MOCA that looked both inward and backward.

Then, in 2003, Gehry gave the Los Angeles Philharmonic its new home and showed that, every once in a while, a work of architecture can transform all it touches — in this case, the orchestra, the audience, music itself, the neighborhood and the city beyond.

Hit a drum or pluck a note on the stage of Disney Hall and it rings with the high-definition clarity and soft sheen that defines American classical music in the digital age. A long time ago and in another part of the country, Carnegie Hall was built to bathe massed strings and horn chords in a warm acoustic vapor. Disney Hall flatters a different set of sounds: the short, sharp shocks of Stravinsky, the tight "tikka-tikkas" and amplified voices of John Adams, the kaleidoscopic whorls of Esa-Pekka Salonen — California composers all.

A concert hall is not a neutral container but an active participant in making music, and here the synchronicity among orchestra, conductor, repertoire and acoustics has helped shape the story of the art form, much as Notre Dame, San Marco, Vienna's Musikverein and CBGB did. I remember hearing the opening concerts at Disney Hall and thinking that the

orchestra was going to have to ratchet itself up a handful of notches to meet the demands of its new home. It has: Today there is no nimbler or more influential orchestra, or one more confident in its artistic identity, than the L.A. Phil. Acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota deserves plenty of credit for that, and so does Gehry, who embedded those sonic qualities in such an ebullient building.

Audiences don't move along orderly hallways here, but through a sequence of tight and vast spaces, accompanied by a rhythm of synopated views — in toward the auditorium, out to the street and sky. Even getting to your seat is a musical experience. That sense of procession surely ignited the imagination of one particular audience member, Yuval Sharon, the visionary director who moved from New York to L.A. in 2009 and soon started staging operas in motion: Christopher Cerrone's "Invisible Cities" among the unsuspecting crowds in Union Station, and the three-composer "Hopscotch" in a fleet of moving cars. Disney Hall gathers artists in its embrace — and then unleashes them on the city.

Any building in a dense downtown slips into an intricate network of urban relationships, like a new spouse joining an extended clan. Disney Hall incorporates the landscape that Gehry's predecessors on Bunker Hill represented. He even extended the immediate topography by lifting it up onto the hall's shoulder in the exquisite, quasi-secret Blue Ribbon Garden. And with its evocations of cliffs, peaks, sails and spume, the building's form relays a sympathetic message from the San Gabriel Mountains looming to the northeast to the surf at the city's other end.

A building this complete and complex can be tough on the architects next door, which is one reason Gehry's masterpiece is now generating more Gehry. Still, Diller Scofidio + Renfro is not easily intimidated, and the firm's design for the Broad is a master class in how to be assertive and respectful at the same time. Disney draws people to its light, reverberant sanctum; the Broad pulls visitors up through a cave-like passage, allowing just a peek or two at the vaults along the way, and delivers them to a wide, elevated platform full of art. Textured, matte and rectilinear where Disney is sleek, glossy and calligraphic, the Broad negotiates between the concert hall's effusiveness and the lineup of introverted boxes along Grand.

A garment gets its oomph from the places where it parts and lifts, and DS + R makes canny use of the white concrete mesh that drapes the box inside, opening an eye-shaped slit on one wall and lifting the hem at the corners. It's as if a breeze from a subway grate has started ruffling the drape; the next gust could make it billow up like Marilyn's dress in "The Seven Year Itch" — or like the costume on the steely diva next door.

*Justin Davidson is the architecture and classical music critic at New York magazine, where he writes about a broad range of design issues. As a classical music and cultural critic at Newsday, he won a Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 2002.*



The Broad on Grand  
Avenue. Diller Scofidio  
+ Renfro designed the  
contemporary art museum,  
which opened in 2015.







# *GRAND PLANS*

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Eli Broad has been compared to Lorenzo de' Medici, a patron without peer who has played major roles at arts institutions throughout Los Angeles. Here Broad looks back at the creation and development of MOCA, the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Broad museum — which have reinvigorated Grand Avenue and downtown and elevated the city's profile as an international cultural capital.





## INTRODUCTION

# LOOKING FOR THE HEART OF A CITY

By ELI BROAD

**I**n 1963, when my wife, Edye, and I moved here from Detroit, Los Angeles did not have what I thought of as a true downtown. As we flew into LAX, the ground below us called to mind the old saying "Los Angeles is 100 suburbs in search of a city."

Los Angeles had developed very differently from cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco. In the first half of the 20th century, financial institutions, department stores, and hotels and restaurants lined streets like Broadway and Spring, and Bunker Hill was still home to a series of elegant, historic structures. Eventually, an expanding car culture and freeway network made it easier for Angelenos to explore a new series of attractions: the suburbs. Their exodus contributed to a decline in downtown's once-flourishing neighborhoods and the institutions that served them. By the late 1950s, various government agencies started to look at redeveloping Bunker Hill.

The urban renewal efforts were slow-going, but not long after we moved to Los Angeles, something interesting started to rise: the Music Center, which turned out to be a beautiful performance space with classical yet modern architecture. It looked like Lincoln Center.

A great city needs a vibrant center where people come to enjoy cultural riches like museums, dance, opera, theater and the symphony, or to take part in civic life at parades, protests and celebrations. The Music Center—including the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Mark Taper Forum and the Ahmanson Theatre—was a start, but it was almost 20 years before another cultural institution arose on Bunker Hill: the Museum of Contemporary Art.

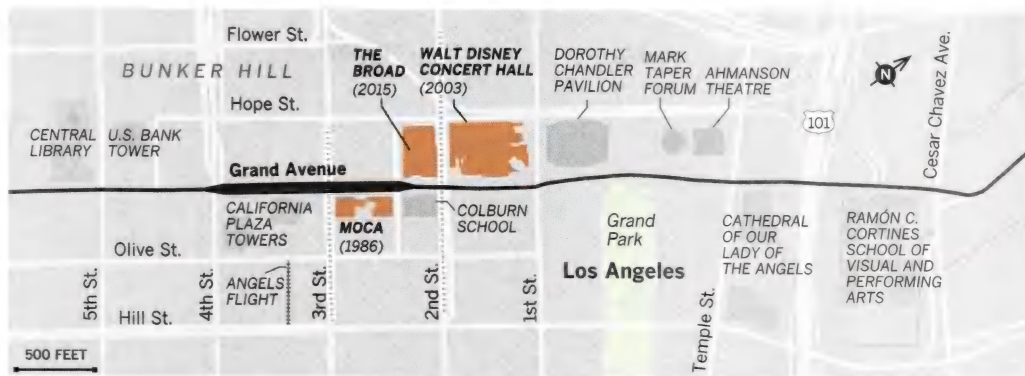
Downtown Los Angeles circa 1962: Grading work, center left, had begun for the Music Center. Lower left, streets cross the 110 Freeway. The Central Library is lower right.

Left: Al Monteverde Los Angeles Times  
Previous page: Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

The Museum of  
Contemporary Art: It  
took a lot of money  
and a little luck.



## CHAPTER ONE: MOCA



Left, Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times; above, Lorena Iñiguez Elebee Los Angeles Times

# At the intersection of art, ambition and money

Starting in the 1950s, Los Angeles became home to brilliant artists — David Hockney, Sam Francis, Robert Irwin, Ed Ruscha, James Turrell, John Baldessari and Ed Kienholz among them — and a growing network of top-notch art schools and galleries. But we didn't have a modern or contemporary art museum.

I started to get interested in contemporary art in the 1970s. Edye had always loved it, but it took time for me to overcome the "shock of the new," as art critic Robert Hughes put it. In fact, the first major artwork we purchased wasn't even a contemporary piece; it was a Van Gogh drawing we bought at Sotheby's for \$95,000 in 1972.

We learned a lot about collecting contemporary art from our friend Taft Schreiber, a Republican fundraiser and entertainment executive whose home was filled with works by Henri Matisse, Alberto Giacometti, Jackson Pollock and Constantin Brancusi. It was through Schreiber that we met other contemporary collectors, including Fred and Marcia Weisman, who had their own enviable art collection and were famous for doing anything and everything for their art, such as buying seats on a plane for a sculpture, or postponing purchasing a home so they could buy art. (Marcia's brother, Norton Simon, is better known these days, but it was Marcia and Fred who first championed access to contemporary art.)

Marcia Weisman, who had a remarkable force of will, wanted L.A. to have a contemporary art museum. Eventually she enlisted me in her cause, and I agreed to be chairman of the board for something that didn't yet exist. Bill Norris, a federal appeals court judge, became president.

I soon learned why it was so hard to raise funds for and establish a museum. The 1970s were a tough time economically, and L.A. didn't have a lot of old-style, old-money philanthropists, as New York or Chicago did.

I also had the sense that many people associated with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art thought a contemporary art museum would be a competitor.

We got a lucky break one night, when Marcia Weisman sat next to Mayor Tom Bradley at a dinner. Bradley had a vision for Los Angeles as a great global city, and she pitched him on the museum. Bradley agreed to name a committee — including Marcia, Norris and me — to establish the museum.

The first thing we needed was a location, and we had the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles — one of a series of agencies authorized by the state to renew struggling areas of California cities — to help. CRA officials talked to us about a number of sites, but when they mentioned Bunker Hill, a space that was underdeveloped and disconnected, something clicked. We already had the Music Center, an anchor of the city's cultural life, and with the addition of a museum devoted to contemporary art, Bunker Hill would have the beginnings of a true city center.

Bradley had already been advocating for a plan for Bunker Hill, one that would bring apartments, a hotel and skyscrapers to an area that would come to include California Plaza. The CRA required developers to pay a 1.5% fee to fund public art, and it occurred to us that we could use that 1.5% to build a new museum on Grand Avenue. Given the size of the project, that could amount to \$16 million.

But the mayor said we couldn't have those funds unless we raised \$10 million for an endowment for the new museum within one year. I kicked things off by pledging \$1 million, and as chairman of the board, I was responsible for raising the other \$9 million. The first significant gift came from Robert O. Anderson, who founded Arco and was a big contemporary art fan. Anderson lived in New Mexico and came to L.A. for meetings, so we met on a Sunday night at our home. Two days later, he gave us \$1 million.

That still left us with a lot of money to raise. We decided to hire a development director — businesswoman and civic leader Andrea Van de Kamp — and we put together a long list of potential donors and figured out who should call whom, starting with 10 people who could afford \$100,000 or more. Then we figured we could get several families to give five-figure



The architect of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Arata Isozaki, would win the Pritzker Prize in 2019.

Hisao Suzuki

amounts. And finally we came up with what everyone thought was a crazy idea: We would name anyone who donated \$10,000 or more a “founder” of the museum. Meanwhile, I ran around town giving speeches about the future of Los Angeles, telling everybody who would listen that MOCA would be the most important art museum since the Museum of Modern Art was founded in 1929 in New York.

Few really believed we had a chance of achieving that status until we hired MOCA’s first director, Pontus Hultén, who founded the Moderna Museet in Stockholm and ran the Centre Pompidou in Paris. He was one of the first Europeans to show such American artists as Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and Jackson Pollock. Art people who thought Los Angeles was just a provincial town were surprised that he would come to us.

By summer 1981, Mayor Bradley’s deadline, we had not just \$10 million but \$13 million for

an endowment, or about \$36 million to \$37 million in today’s dollars. With Hultén’s help, we recruited an impressive, international board of trustees. But we still didn’t have a building and a substantial collection, and we were trying to open before the 1984 Summer Olympics.

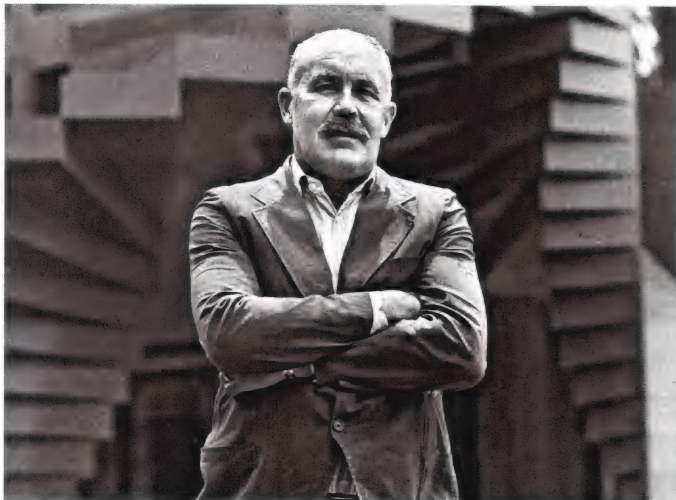
The board had agreed on an architect, Arata Isozaki of Japan, but the developers — Bunker Hill Associates, a consortium of three firms — wanted to put the museum inside its condo building, which I thought was insulting.

I managed to convince the developers that the museum would attract foot traffic and shouldn’t be tucked away somewhere. Eventually, they agreed to a building that fronted Grand Avenue but insisted on having part of MOCA tucked underground so that people walking by could see more of their buildings from the street. Without that, the developers said, there would be no deal. We had no choice but to agree.

It was an unfortunate compromise for Los Angeles, for a talented architect (who won this year’s Pritzker Prize) and for me. As chairman of the board, I had led negotiations between the museum board, the developer and the city — and I’m not sure I did enough to get the landmark we needed.

That wasn’t the worst of it. High interest rates were slowing down construction projects at the time — and it started to look as if there would be only a hole in the ground by the Olympics. Then Hultén announced he was leaving — but he left us a parting gift: the suggestion that we put up a temporary gallery space. He even found a location in Little Tokyo — in an old warehouse on Central Avenue that used to store police cars and ammunition for the Police Department.

It was a brilliant idea that might have saved the whole effort. The Temporary Contemporary, today called the Geffen Contemporary,



MOCA's first director, Pontus Hultén — who founded the Moderna Museet in Stockholm and ran the Centre Pompidou in Paris — in 1980.



Bill Kieschnick, Arco's chief executive — above in 1985 — succeeded the admittedly demanding Eli Broad on the museum's board.



When the museum effort needed \$10 million, Arco founder and contemporary art fan Robert O. Anderson donated \$1 million.



Photographs by Los Angeles Times

Giuseppe Panza di Biumo sold MOCA part of his art collection in a deal that benefited the count and was a boon to the museum.

was a hit when it opened in 1983. We put on several exhibitions during the Olympics, and construction on MOCA started not long after.

MOCA already had some art, about 100 works, thanks to loans and donations, and it was a lucky break when a large, high-quality collection practically fell into our hands.

One of our trustees, Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo, was a renowned collector with a great eye. He had hundreds of works that he kept in two big castles in Italy, but he also kept about 80 contemporary masterpieces in Zurich.

The count was facing a new law that required citizens to sell anything they held outside the country and then bring the money back to Italy. If they didn't sell, then they had to bring their property back and pay 20% tax on the value. Panza's art had appreciated so much that there was no way he could afford the tax.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Panza's collection — seven Rothkos, 12 Klines, 11 Rauschenbergs, four Lichtensteins, eight Rosenquists and 16 Oldenburg sculptures, among others — would amount to an astonishing acquisition of contemporary art by any institution.

With some convincing from me, Panza eventually agreed to give MOCA a chance to buy his collection sometime before the end of the year — 1983 — for up to \$12.5 million. Everybody was trying to buy this collection. (I would've bought it myself if MOCA hadn't, and I threatened as much when MOCA's board didn't want to make the purchase. Eventually the board members agreed to let me negotiate for the collection but said I couldn't pay more than \$12 million, with a down payment of \$2 million.)

The count and I met at our home in the afternoon — convenient, since he and his wife were staying in our guesthouse. I offered him \$11 million, with \$1 million up front, and the rest over

seven years, interest-free. Panza thought that time frame was too long, so I asked, "What about \$12 million over seven years?" He liked that better, but he still wanted \$2 million down. I told him that if he took more up front, he would lose money because of how quickly the lira was dropping in value. That convinced him. We put it all down on a piece of paper, handwritten, and signed it by dinner.

Today, those artworks are worth well over \$1 billion.

When MOCA opened on Grand Avenue in 1986, we finally had it all: a building, an endowment, a collection and a home on Bunker Hill. By then, I'd been off the MOCA board for two years, and, to be honest, everyone on the board — including me — agreed I'd probably stayed a few years too long. Some people find me quite demanding. I think everyone was happy when Bill Kieschnick, the chief executive of Arco at the time, took over from me.



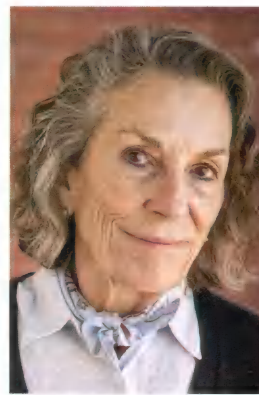
Walt Disney Concert  
Hall opened in 2003.  
A design was first  
unveiled in 1991.



Gene Lester Getty Images



Los Angeles Times



David Butow For The Times



Los Angeles Times

From left: Lillian Disney, who donated \$50 million for the new home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Richard Riordan, then mayor of Los Angeles and an Eli Broad friend who was enlisted in the cause when it seemed as if the project was dead; Disney daughter Diane Disney Miller, who in the late '90s put a renewed energy into the fight; and businesswoman and philanthropist Andrea Van de Kamp, a "people person" who helped lead fundraising efforts.

# Delays, disagreements and some Disney magic

A year after MOCA opened its Grand Avenue building, Lillian Disney donated \$50 million to create the Walt Disney Concert Hall for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. At the time it was one of the largest single donations to the arts in the United States.

For decades, the Phil had played at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, a wonderful building but one that served many purposes, including a packed calendar of opera, dance performances, concerts and, upon occasion, the Oscars. A new hall would be a home for the Phil and, thanks to the selection of Frank Gehry as architect, a landmark for Los Angeles.

Lillian Disney, Walt's widow, chose the site, a county-owned piece of land across 1st Street from the Music Center, and in 1991, the first design was unveiled, with a price tag of \$110 million.

Of course, nothing comes easily on Grand Avenue. The economy continued to fluctuate, and there were delays caused by disagreements over architecture and planning. Contractors raised their estimates for Gehry's unusual design. The parking garage, funded by a county bond issue, wasn't done when the Northridge earthquake hit in 1994, and at one point, county officials threatened to take back the land. Work on the project stopped.

Everyone started saying Disney Hall was dead. I remember Newsweek calling it the "temple of doom," which didn't help with donors. Then Diane Disney Miller — Lillian and Walt Disney's daughter — asked for help from Mayor Richard Riordan, a friend of mine going back to the '70s. He came to me not long afterward, and we agreed the hall couldn't die. Our city was hurting after a recession, civil unrest, fires and an earthquake. Disney Hall wouldn't solve the city's problems, but it would be

a symbol of what we could accomplish together.

I called Van de Kamp, then the head of the Music Center's board, and off we went, just as we did two decades earlier. We got a "no" here and there, but two of our initial asks — the Times Mirror Foundation and one anonymous donor — each promised us several million dollars. That anonymous donor turned the tide — people were intrigued, and they wanted to know more.

We kept at it, with calls, breakfasts, coffees and dinner meetings all over town. We started with a list of about 60 companies, foundations and people whom we thought could handle a \$5-million gift or more. Riordan had sway as mayor, Van de Kamp was a people person, and I wouldn't leave anyone alone until I got a yes. Soon we had \$10 million from Arco, \$15 million from Ron Burkle and his companies, and some other gifts. Riordan and I each pitched in \$5 million. In six months we had what we needed — \$52 million — to get construction rolling again.

Everything was moving along well, and we were almost to \$100 million by spring 1997. But then we hit more hurdles, had some false starts and faced more delays. I was under a lot of pressure to keep the project on schedule so that the building would actually go up and donors wouldn't back out.

At a moment when it looked as if it could be 1994 all over again, Miller and Gehry got the ball rolling once more. She put in more money to cover the additional time that Gehry and others needed, and I reluctantly gave in on extending the timeline and got back to fundraising. In 1998, once we had enough money, I stepped down as chairman and asked Bill Siart to succeed me and work with the contractor and others to get the hall built. In 1999, construction of the hall officially began, with an estimated price tag of \$274 million.





Disney Hall, which opened in fall 2003, received international acclaim, and some time after, Deborah Borda, then president and chief executive of the Phil, was able to recruit Gustavo Dudamel as the new music director.

While Disney Hall was under construction, it became clear that Grand Avenue needed a full-scale master plan. There were still many empty parcels and underused parking lots and no large sidewalks or streetscaping to connect the landmarks. The biggest challenge was that different governments — city and county — owned different parcels, and those governments did not always work well together.

The Grand Avenue Committee, which I co-chaired with Jim Thomas, was tasked with figuring out how to spark that collaboration, to streamline decision-making between two existing government bodies. (As far as we could tell, the city and the county had done this only once before — to create a crime lab, which was a little less ambitious than what we were thinking.)

After a lot of meetings and many drafts of a “joint powers agreement,” we were able to get to work on selecting a developer — New York-based Related Cos. — for a mixed-use residential and hotel complex across from Disney Hall.

It was Related that agreed to pay for a park on Grand Avenue — something I’d been thinking about for years. During the final presentation on the complex, I brought up the idea and asked Martha Welborne, managing director of the Grand Avenue Committee, “How much would a park cost?” Fifty million, she replied, and I said, “OK, so we need \$50 million up front. Nonrefundable.” It put the developers on the spot, but it was a fraction of what the project was worth — \$2 billion.

The Great Recession delayed things, but Grand Park finally opened in summer 2012, providing 12 acres of badly needed green space downtown. It is a vital gathering place where people from all over the region, of all backgrounds, come together to celebrate New Year’s Eve and the Fourth of July, to protest and fight for what they believe in, and to connect with their city.



A musical and visual celebration kicked off Disney Hall’s opening in October 2003. In attendance, above, were key players Diane Disney Miller and architect Frank Gehry.

Left: Al Seib Los Angeles Times  
Above: Carlo Allegri Getty Images





Los Angeles Times photos: left, Jay L. Clendenin; above, Mel Melcon

In 2005, Eli Broad with County Supervisor Gloria Molina and Mayor-elect Antonio Villaraigosa. Broad considered sites in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica for his museum, but downtown L.A. was his first choice.

# ‘We’ll give you whatever Santa Monica is offering’

**I**n November 2009, around Thanksgiving, I sat down for dinner with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. “I hear you want to build a museum in Santa Monica,” he said. “Why don’t you put your museum on Grand Avenue?”

I said, “Antonio, life is too short to deal with the city, the county, the CRA and the JPA [Joint Powers Authority].”

He had a good laugh at that, but he also knew what I meant.

Edye and I had set up the Broad Art Foundation in 1984 to create a free lending library for museums around the world, but we always wanted to bring contemporary art to the widest possible audience. Donating artwork to existing museums meant that about 95% of our collection would sit in storage, with no one to see it, and we realized the best way to do that was to create a museum for our collection, which included 2,000 contemporary artworks stored at three locations.

We’d been thrilled to see Grand Avenue develop into a cultural hub during our time in Los Angeles, and we thought our art collection might contribute to that development. But the JPA — a panel empowered by the city and the county — and Related Cos. were hoping to build apartments and retail on a

parcel just south of Disney Hall, at the intersection of 2nd Street and Grand, leaving little room for a cultural space.

We were considering sites in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica, which had offered an 8-acre parcel right by its City Hall, along with such other benefits as a \$1-a-year lease and design and construction funding. But Villaraigosa said, “We’ll give you whatever Santa Monica is offering.”

He didn’t have to convince me; Grand Avenue had always been my first choice. By early 2010, the Joint Powers Authority was open to negotiating with us about the parcel across the street from Disney Hall, which would give us the ability to build a 120,000-square-foot museum. Plus, it was close to MOCA, which Edye and I had continued to support over the years, including giving \$30 million during the 2008 recession, when it almost went bankrupt.

Before we could begin planning the museum, we needed approval from the city, the county and the Community Redevelopment Agency. This took some time and effort, given that a few leaders saw the effort as elitist, or too focused on downtown at the expense of other regions. But we were eventually able to win the support we needed.

The trick was to find an architect who could come up with a design that wouldn't clash with Disney Hall but wouldn't be anonymous, either — so we sponsored a competition that attracted world-class architects. There were several exciting designs, but Diller Scofidio + Renfro had the best idea. Elizabeth Diller — who had won a fellowship from the MacArthur Foundation — came up with the concept of “the vault and the veil.” Inside the building was a “vault” that housed our collection, which visitors could look at through windows in the stairwell. Wrapping the outside of the building was a honeycomb white “veil” that let passersby see inside.

The Broad opened in September 2015, two years later than I wanted, but with a lot of fanfare. We had a civic dedication with Gov. Jerry Brown and Mayor Eric Garcetti and held two dinners for 800 each. Among the attendees were the directors of major art museums, including the Met and MOMA; university presidents such as Drew Gilpin Faust of Harvard; artists from our collection, such as Mark Bradford, Cindy Sherman, Takashi Murakami and Barbara Kruger — and former President Clinton, who delivered a keynote speech.

Our success is thanks, in no small part, to the leadership of our longtime curator, now the founding director of the Broad, Joanne Heyler. We thought we would have about 250,000 visitors a year. Instead, attendance has been exceeding 800,000 a year, and we are projecting 1 million visitors for 2019. We are grateful that the museum is appealing to diverse audiences and to young people — the average age of our attendees is 33, about 13 years younger than typical museum audiences nationwide. General admission is free, and three years later, we often have a line of people curling around the block, waiting to get inside.

We believe we have reinvented the American art museum, and Edye and I are proud to have committed more than \$500 million (which does not include the value of the art) to create the Broad and an endowment that will allow generations of Angelenos and people from around the world to experience contemporary art.



Katie Falkenberg Los Angeles Times

Joanne Heyler, the founding director of the Broad. The museum's attendance has been exceeding 800,000 a year.



Kirk McKoy Los Angeles Times

Architect Elizabeth Diller came up with the concept of “the vault and the veil” for her Broad museum design.



Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times



Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

Edythe Broad "had always loved" contemporary art, her husband says, but it took a while for him to catch up.

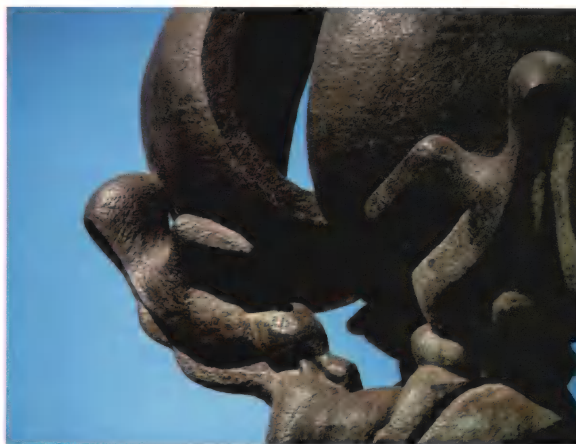


Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

Eli Broad in his museum in 2015, the year it opened. "We believe we have reinvented the American art museum," he says.



A sculpture of used airplane parts by Nancy Rubins outside the Museum of Contemporary Art. Right, a 29-foot-tall bronze sculpture by Jacques Lipchitz on the Music Center's plaza.



Los Angeles Times photos: Luis Sinco, left; Kent Nishimura, above

# Along four blocks, public art shapes and shifts our expectations

By CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT  
*Art Critic*

**F**rom the Music Center on Bunker Hill to the Central Library at West 5th Street, Grand Avenue runs just over half a mile. But those four city blocks contain an enticing thumbnail sketch of shifting ideas in mostly 20th century public art.

In 1969, a 29-foot-tall bronze sculpture by Jacques Lipchitz was dedicated on the Music Center's main plaza. It's among the city's most familiar public artworks.

Chunky, muscular, primeval male and female figures rise up, standing on one another's shoulders, to greet a teardrop-shaped aureole being lowered by a dove. Inside the aureole, an abstracted female form spreads her arms wide in a welcoming gesture.

Lipchitz, a sculptor of allegorical subjects in Cubist forms, titled the work "Peace on Earth." The composition derived from an earlier sculpture, designed by the Lithuanian-born Jewish artist for a Catholic church in France. But his abstractions transform religious imagery into something more secular and universal: The Madonna is now a picture of open-hearted warmth, with the stylized pelicans

around the aureole's base shedding their traditional symbolism of Christian sacrifice to become a decorative interlace of celebratory nature. The dove, by the 1960s an international icon signifying peace, crowns a monolith erected at the Vietnam War's height.

And war is very much what drove the era's public art — not necessarily the Southeast Asian conflict, but more generally the Cold War that dominated America's cultural life. "Peace on Earth" embodies public art as an implement of Cold War mediation. Different from Soviet government artistic control, it functioned as an emblem of free expression for a modern American cultural center.

A block and a half away, a radically dissimilar sculpture has been telling a very different story.

The plaza of the Museum of Contemporary Art has been dominated by a towering cluster of tattered airplane parts — dented nosecones, chopped-up fuselage, busted stabilizers, bruised manifolds — held together by half a ton of steel wire, tied to hold all those fragments in a tense grip. The explosive form stands 25 feet high and 54 feet wide, poised



atop a relatively slender, vertical steel support.

The descriptive title of L.A.-based artist Nancy Rubins' sculptural extravaganza ends with a nod to its original location and eventual resting place: "Chas' Stainless Steel, Mark Thompson's Airplane Parts, About 1,000 Pounds of Steel Wire, and Gagosian's Beverly Hills Space, at MOCA."

The broad, V-shaped contour suggests a bird in flight — nature distantly recalled via Industrial Age detritus. (Birds regularly build nests within the open constellation of forms.) In reality, the steel maelstrom is a material powerhouse of barely contained dynamism — the chaotic brutality of the modern era reconfigured as a carefully considered, orderly work of art. Its tensile strength thrums with potential energy, creation salvaged from a history of epic destruction.

Workers recently started the arduous process of disassembling the mammoth sculpture, in place since 2002, to move it seven blocks east to the plaza in front of MOCA's Little Tokyo warehouse space, which is being refurbished. (The bird's nests are being relocated too.) Last year, the 10-ton Lipchitz bronze scuttled across the Music Center plaza to the edge of Hope Street as part of a redesign of the outdoor space currently underway. Public art isn't always static.

One that is at least semi-fixed has been adjacent to the glass tower at One California Plaza

for a couple of decades. Mark di Suvero's massive, late-1970s "Pre-Natal Memories" is a kid's playful backyard seesaw enlarged to industrial proportions, made from 16,000 pounds of I-beams and welded steel.

I once had the pleasure of taking a wild ride on the giant teeter-totter, when it was first shown at a Venice art gallery. Now in a public place, the two wings had to be tethered by steel cables so that it no longer moves — except in the imagination.

Across the street, the twin-tower complex at Wells Fargo Center is getting a ground-level facelift that will dramatically reconfigure an aspect of public art that came in the generation after the Lipchitz commission. L.A.'s Community Redevelopment Agency, now defunct, required that 1% of a project's development budget be devoted to public art acquisitions. Cold War symbolism shifted toward enhancing the quality of daily urban life.

The mandate was somewhat elastic, also providing the funds for construction of MOCA's nearby building. But the program came with a little-noticed clause: After 30 years, a work of art was no longer required to remain in the public realm. The Wells Fargo redesign led to the sudden sale of important sculptures by Joan Miro and Jean Dubuffet, which once adorned the now-raised garden atrium designed by Lawrence Halprin.

High construction fencing now obscures

the outdoor plaza. Happily, the 30-foot, black-painted mast of "Night Sail," a mysterious Cubist collage of nautical and geometric forms in aluminum and steel by Louise Nevelson (1899-1988), protrudes over the top. (Coincidental factoid: In her youth, Nevelson was a studio assistant to Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, whose friendship with young Jacques Lipchitz in Paris also inspired the Lithuanian's embrace of Cubism.) At 33 tons, shipping the monumental "Night Sail" off to an auction house for sale was hardly practical. It stays.

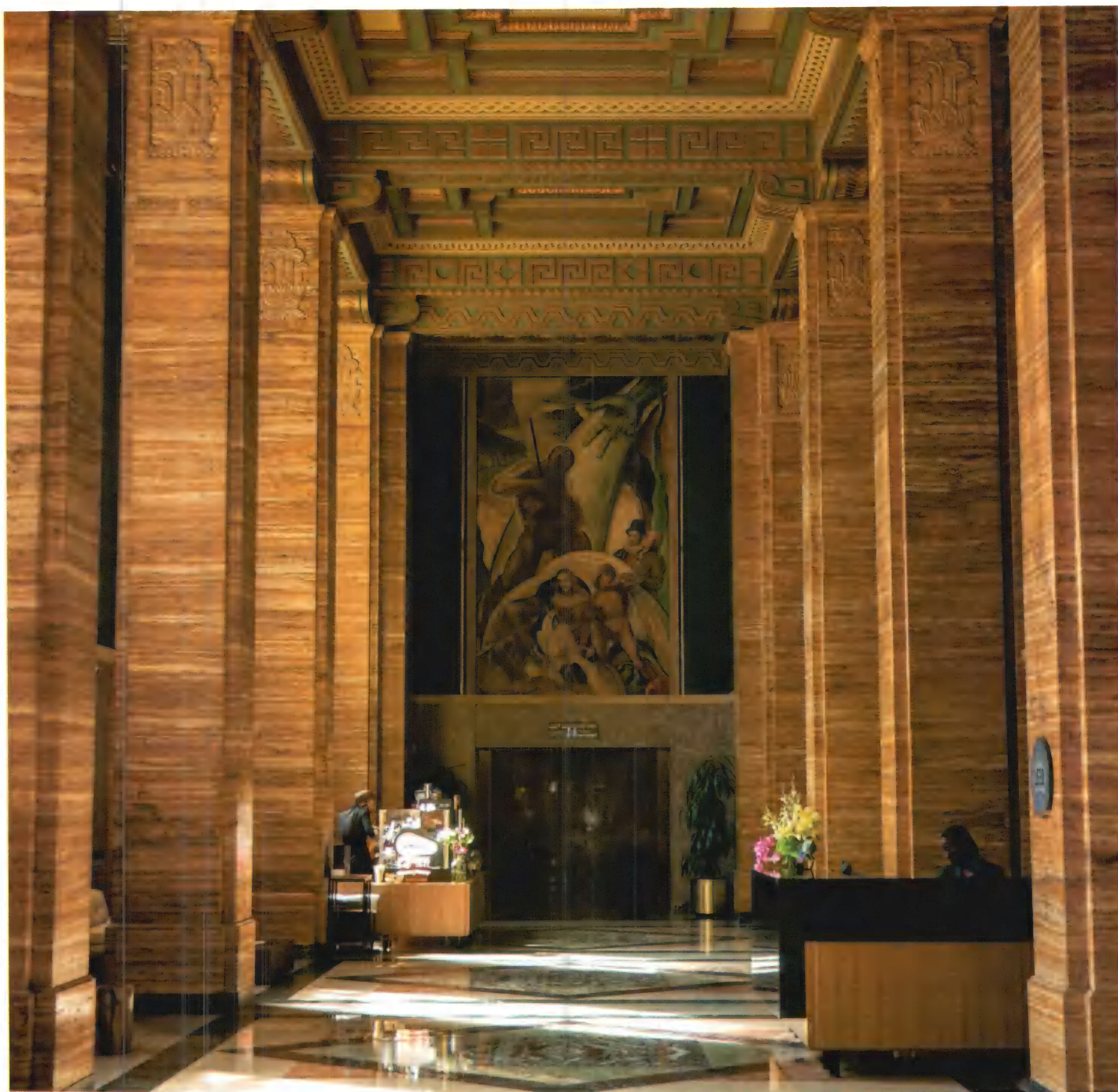
Farther along Grand, a wonderfully kitschy 1961 sculptural relief on the side wall of an AT&T switching center shows the globe linked by undersea telephone cables and satellite relays that ricochet off a fey male nude. In designer Anthony B. Heinsbergen's topsyturvy map, South America drifts next to North America, Africa floats above Europe, Australia hovers nearby. Ma Bell's modern communications system rearranges the world's fixed geography.

At the corner of Grand and 5th, a 1930 mural dubbed "The Apotheosis of Power" inside the Art Deco lobby of the CalEdison building shows the hand of God descending from the sky to bring hydroelectric energy to 16th century English physicist William Gilbert, who coined the word electricity; kite-flier Benjamin Franklin; and an indigenous couple looking like a neutered Adam and Eve. Hollywood



Photographs by Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times

Top, Mark di Suvero's late-1970s "Pre-Natal Memories" at One California Plaza. It is made from 16,000 pounds of I-beams and welded steel.  
Above, Anthony B. Heinsbergen's 1961 sculptural relief on the side wall of an AT&T switching center on Grand Avenue.



Photographs by Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times

Above, a 1930 mural dubbed "The Apotheosis of Power" inside the Art Deco lobby of the CalEdison building. Right, the high ceilings of the Central Library's rotunda showcase decorative stencils that were painted directly on the concrete surfaces by Los Angeles artist Julian Garnsey.

production designer Hugo Ballin, the era's go-to guy for corporate murals, rendered an Anglo-American epic in stylistic imitation of Michelangelo.

Pass 5th Street to Bertram Goodhue's Central Library, one of the city's architectural masterpieces, and a pair of public murals made six decades apart tell of dramatic change.

A 1932 set of four monumental wall paintings in the main rotunda upstairs charts a storybook fable of Spanish Colonial settlement in California. (Seeing the affable, nearly completed work helped inspire Mexican artist

David Alfaro Siqueiros to paint his own radically different 1932 mural, "Tropical America: Oppressed and Destroyed by Imperialism," on a nearby Olvera Street wall.)

Gifted literary illustrator Dean Cornwell tells an impossibly sunny story in pastel pictures arrayed around a magnificent globe-chandelier, suspended from an elaborate compass rose painted on the ceiling. Tranquil harmony reigns.

Directly below the rotunda, a visual uproar is underway.

The low-slung ceiling of the first-floor en-

try lobby now sets the upstairs story spinning. "The Seven Centers," a marvelous 1993 Renee Petropoulos mural, invokes the seven continents in bright, flat, vivid hues.

Ornamental patterns and decorative interlaces weave in and out of Celtic, Chinese, Persian, Ghanaian and other styles. The whirling designs, none centered on the room's modest Deco chandelier, explode a traditional ceiling's compass rose.

Along Grand Avenue, one artist's ceiling is another artist's floor — in this case, physically and conceptually.

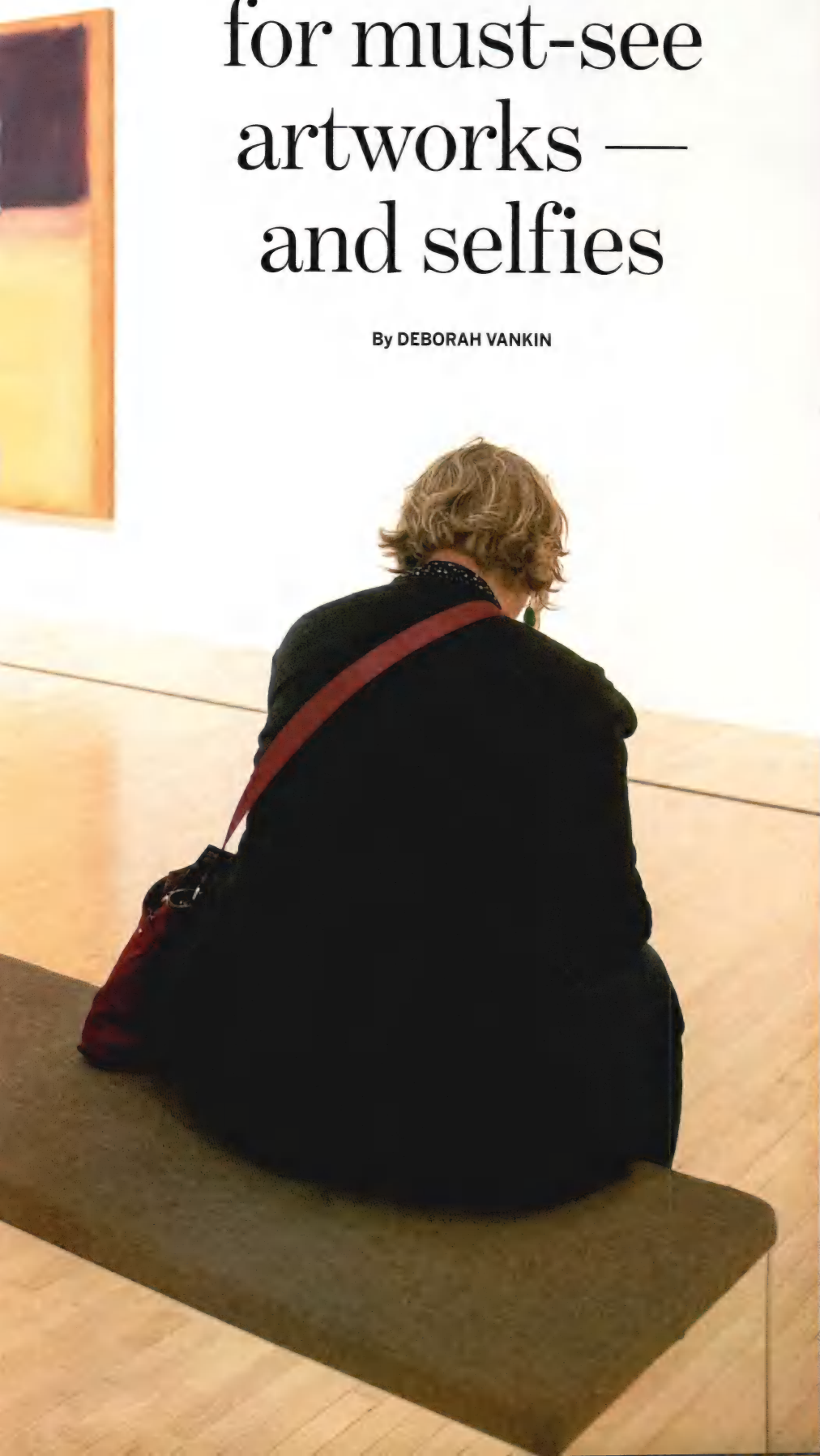




The Museum of Contemporary Art features one of the largest collections of Mark Rothko works in the country.

# Walk this way for must-see artworks — and selfies

By DEBORAH VANKIN



## RULE NO. 1:

### Walk.

Los Angeles may be a vast tangle of freeways best navigated on wheels, but there are plenty of walkable art hubs in the city, and the densest among them might be on Grand Avenue, between 1st and 4th streets. Here, clustered together, are the Broad museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the latter of which houses some impressive but lesser-known fine art.

Since the Broad opened in 2015, this section of the so-called Grand Avenue culture corridor has blossomed — super-bloomed, if you will — regularly drawing unwieldy crowds of selfie-seeking millennials, expectant tourists and art-loving hipsters. A flurry of the requisite food carts serving vegan ice cream and watermelon-lime agua fresca followed, contributing to a lively scene that, on any given afternoon, is nearly as colorful as what's inside the museums.

Here's the rest of the rule book for how to maximize your art expedition. Wear shoes with good soles; there's art traction to be had here.

## RULE NO. 2:

### Say cheese — or watch others saying it.

What not to miss at the Broad: Since the museum's debut, Eli and Edythe Broad's vibrant collection of postwar and contemporary art, with its iconic Pop Art works by crowd-pleasers such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Keith Haring, has been a social media magnet. Leading the pack as the museum's most Instagrammed work is Yayoi Kusama's immersive "Infinity Mirrored Room — The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away," which draws roughly one visitor a minute. There are only a handful of Kusama's infinity mirror rooms on view in the U.S., and this one — an intimate chamber tricked out with mirrors, twinkling LEDs and glistening water — is worth the added wait, a trippy and Zen-like experience at once.

Getting around the Broad is half the fun. The futuristic ride up the 105-foot-long lobby escalator deposits visitors into the belly of the building on the third floor (some have likened the escalator to a birth canal). Takashi Murakami's psychedelic-looking mural, "In the Land of the Dead, Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow," and El Anatsui's Kimona-like "Red Block," made of flattened bottle caps and copper wire, are standouts of the collection and have long greeted visitors at the top of the escalator, in the central, third floor exhibition space. The works are currently on loan, but the space still houses must-see art, including Mark Bradford's 34-foot work of social abstraction, "Helter Skelter I," about cult leader Charles Manson's '60s-era obsession to start a race war and newly acquired pieces by Julie Mehretu, including her energetic if chaotic "Congress,"



Photographs by Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times

Jeff Koons' "Balloon Dog (Blue)" and Yayoi Kusama's "Infinity Mirrored Room — The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away" are both at the Broad.

incorporating a vortex of swirling, national flag-like imagery.

If a super-sticky art selfie is your goal, Jeff Koons' blingy "Tulips" sculpture is there too. And his shimmering, metallic "Balloon Dog (Blue)," along with Robert Therrien's ginormous, Alice-in-Wonderland-like "Under the Table," are in galleries on the same floor.

From there, make a beeline for one of the museum's most beautiful if disturbing nooks, featuring the work of Kara Walker. A collection of her large-scale, silhouetted paper cutouts, "African't," spans a curved wall and explores the dark history of plantation life in the Deep South. Some of her most powerful works are tiny, delicate cutouts inside a case, "Burning African Village Play Set with Big House and Lynching," presenting a frightening world, teeming with violence.

Don't miss a peek into the museum's transparent art storage area from the staircase landings, or the view from a third-floor corner gallery facing north — the building's milky, honeycomb-like architecture offers glimpses of Disney Hall's gleaming, silvery curves across the street and patches of street life below.

### **RULE NO. 3:** **Channel your inner artist.**

What not to miss at MOCA: If the Broad is one man's collection, or vision, then MOCA, across the street, is a collection of collections. The contemporary art museum, with its more than 7,000 works from the 1940s on, is often

called the artists' museum, as it was founded by local artists and civic leaders in 1979.

The museum features one of the largest collections of Mark Rothko works in the country. Visitors travel from all over the globe to see the "Rothko room," with about half a dozen towering canvases, at any one time, in delicious, saturate hues of red, yellow, orange and purple.

Among the many collections gifted to the museum by artists and patrons is the Panza Collection, 80 abstract expressionist and Pop Art works from Italian collector Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo, which includes works by Franz Kline, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg and James Rosenquist. More recently, the Blake Byrne Collection, acquired in 2004, features works by 78 artists such as Gordon Matta-Clark, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Mike Kelley, among others. All of which amounts to a prism of perspectives channeled through art.

MOCA's iconic, action-oriented Jackson Pollock painting, "Number 1, 1949" — which the artist created by hurling paint straight from the can onto the canvas or dripping it from sticks — is being restored but will be back on view this summer. And other pillars of the collection remain on view. Among them: Alberto Giacometti's tall, spindly bronze sculptures, "Tall Figure II" and "Tall Figure III," which echo both the horrors of World War II and the contemporary global refugee crisis; and a wall of Claes Oldenburg's painted plaster objects — clothing, food and household items one might find in a neighborhood store — that

collectively speak to materialism, consumer culture and the commercialization of art.

The Arata Isozaki-designed MOCA building itself is of note, considered an important example of postmodern architecture, with an emphasis on geometric forms — pyramids and squares and circles. And just a few blocks away, it's worth noting, is the museum's vast 40,000-square-foot Geffen Contemporary space. Barbara Kruger's 1990 mural on the building's exterior, "Untitled (Questions)," was recently re-installed there and urgently asks passersby: "Who is beyond the law?" "Who dies first?" and "Who laughs last?"

### **RULE NO. 4:** **Follow the cat in the purple smoking jacket.**

What not to miss at the Walt Disney Concert Hall: Sure, the building itself might be Los Angeles' most recognizable, not to mention one of the crowning achievements of architect Frank Gehry's career. But once you've snapped a picture of the exterior of Disney Hall and visited its famous, French fry-like pipe organ, wind your way back down to the lobby and sign up for "Thought Experiments in F# Minor."

The mind-bending work, from Canadian artist duo Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, is a free, immersive, augmented reality "video walk," with 3-D sound, through Disney Hall and its environs. It was one of several commissions marking the Los Angeles Philharmonic's centennial season. As they navigate the building, guests don puffy headphones



Paintings by Keith Haring and a sculpture by John Ahearn at the Broad.



Peter Alexander's "Blue" in Walt Disney Concert Hall.





Photographs by Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times

At the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion: A portrait of Chandler, left, by William F. Draper. Above, Thomas Hardy's ceiling-mounted, gold-leafed bronze sculpture "Sun Birds."

and watch a pre-recorded video, on a Disney Hall-provided iPad Mini, hosted by a mischievous hairless cat in said smoking jacket.

The work is dense and poetic, weaving poetry, quantum physics, science fiction and news events — not to mention musical performances by the Los Angeles Philharmonic — all while employing multimedia to distort participants' sense of reality.

On the way out, don't miss the massive 48-foot-long mural, "Blue," by California light and space artist Peter Alexander. Gehry requested he make the work for the building. It hangs along a terrace-level staircase, depicting sunlight flickering on the Pacific Ocean's surface.

REDCAT, CalArts' downtown center for contemporary arts on the lower level of Disney Hall, includes a 3,000-square-foot gallery worth swinging by that features rotating exhibitions of experimental work by international artists as well as a black-box theater and bar.

#### **RULE NO. 5: Pay your respects.**

What not to miss at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion: In the mid-1950s, Dorothy Buffum Chandler, wife of Los Angeles Times publisher Norman Chandler, willed the Music Center's first building into existence by leading a campaign that raised nearly \$19 million in private donations. Today, honoring her efforts, there's an imposing portrait of "Buffy" by William F. Draper in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion's Founders Room that looms over VIP guests sipping champagne during intermission at the opera. The building's midcentury glam exteri-

or and grandiose interior, with its draping crystal chandeliers, gets all the attention; but there's actually notable fine art throughout — and free art tours through the Music Center.

The Founders Room features works on loan, indefinitely, from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The exhibit includes eight artworks by under-recognized female artists working in Southern California in the '30s and '40s. Claire Falkenstein's abstract metal sculpture, "Vibration," as well as her painting "Tapping Out Steel"; June Harwood's simplistic geometric "Sliver Series (Blue, Violet, Green)"; and Gloria Stuart's "Watts Towers I" are stand-outs.

Elsewhere in the building, hovering over the antique marble bar on the second floor, is Thomas Hardy's ceiling-mounted, gold-leafed bronze sculpture, "Sun Birds." The clusters of what amount to 500 birds glimmer against the room's dark mirrors and black walnut paneling, giving them an almost animated, dramatic effect.

Other notable artworks surround the bar, including Frank Stella's bold, minimalist painting "Ossipee III"; a "Signature Quilt," a work created by artist Sandi Fox in 1981 that features embroidered signatures of Music Center supporters and performing artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Gregory Peck and Natalie Wood; and a tapestry by Mexican artist Leonardo Nierman that captures, the artist once said, "the eternal romance between music and color."

#### **RULE NO. 6: Rest.**

You'll need it.

# Beyond these walls, a mission to encourage, enrich and educate

By JESSICA GELT

**T**he Grand Avenue arts corridor may be perched on a hill, but the organizations that have come to define it believe their turf extends across Southern California — and beyond. Giving back to the community is key to each institution's mission, particularly when it comes to youth outreach. Here is a sampling of their programs:

## L.A. Opera

The fourth-largest opera company in the U.S., based at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, administers more than 25 programs out of its education department. These include initiatives that pair elementary and secondary schools with Los Angeles Opera teaching artists to help children create and perform specially commissioned operas. The organization also partners with the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to present free, large-scale community performances conducted by music director James Conlon.

## Music Center

The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Ahmanson Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater and Walt Disney Concert Hall all fall under the umbrella of the Music Center, one of the largest performing arts centers in the country. It recently formed Music Center Arts, or TMC Arts, which approaches arts education through community engagement. Initiatives include Dance DTLA, a free summer program that invites live bands, DJs and prominent dance instructors to teach group lessons in a variety of styles and musical genres.

## Colburn School

This performing arts school, with a focus on music and dance, features a Center for Innovation and Community Impact that offers education for low-income students via a variety of free peer-to-peer performances, summer classes and scholarships. Through these programs, 5,000 students hear music played by Community School participants annually, and more than 200 students, in grades 1 through 12, receive five-plus hours a week of instruction.

## The Broad

For the next few months, the contemporary art museum is bringing groups of schoolchildren to see its exhibit, "Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power 1963-1983," which highlights the contributions of black artists during the civil rights movement. It is also offering free access to the show every Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. and is hosting a series of free gallery talks featuring history lessons from current community activists and artists from South Los Angeles.

## MOCA

Kids can unleash their inner artist via a classroom partnership program called Contemporary Art Start, which connects students in grades 3 through 12 with the museum through teacher training, school curriculum, museum visits and family-involvement opportunities. Since its founding in 1986, the program has reached more than 100,000 students and 3,000 teachers.

## Center Theatre Group

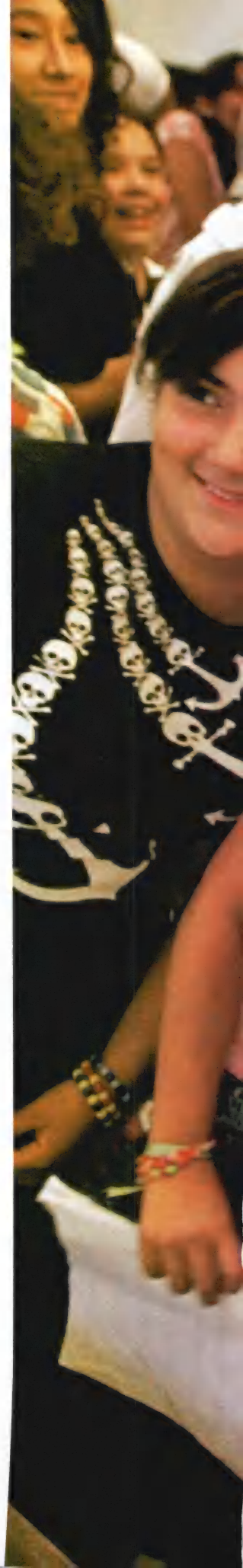
This 52-year-old Los Angeles institution is one of the nation's leading theater companies, staging plays and programs at the Ahmanson, Mark Taper Forum and the Kirk Douglas Theatre. It hosts annual college and career festivals for high school students that facilitate conversations between budding thespians and theater professionals from dozens of colleges and universities, including USC, UCLA, Pepperdine and Emerson College. It also hosts a series of library readings, student matinees and audience talks.

## Los Angeles Philharmonic

L.A.'s hometown orchestra is considered one of the best in the world, thanks to its charismatic maestro, Gustavo Dudamel, and its reputation for bold experimentation. Its Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, or YOLA, offers free music instruction in under-served neighborhoods, and more than 1,200 students from the ages of 6 to 18 participate at four community sites annually.

All of the listed organizations participate in Grand Ave. Arts: All Access, which will take place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Nov. 2. Currently in its fifth year, the community event will feature family-friendly activities, workshops and tours that offer opportunities to interact with the arts institutions on Grand Avenue. The program is free and open to the public.

Lawrence K. Ho Los Angeles Times





Gustavo Dudamel,  
center, with members  
of the Expo Center  
Youth Orchestra.





OTIUM



MACCHERONI REPUBLIC



# A destination for every taste

By AMY SCATTERGOOD

The blocks of Grand Avenue that are home to the Broad museum, MOCA, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the rest of the Music Center make up what is arguably the aesthetic center of Los Angeles. And if you're hoping to top off your cultural immersion with some food and drink, you're in luck. Within half a mile or so of the silver wings of Frank Gehry's concert hall and the honeycomb walls of the Broad, there's a wealth of terrific restaurants and bars, places where chefs and bartenders are putting their own art on plates and in bowls and glasses.

You might start at Otium, a restaurant that opened in 2015 in partnership with (and next door to) the Broad, or head to Patina, in the base of Disney Hall itself. Or you might want to take Angels Flight, the historic funicular railway, down the hill to the Grand Central Market. Within a short walk from the century-old food court, you'll find a vast array of other restaurant options, from Japanese omakase breakfast to plates of Indonesian curry to a highball bar. Because there's nothing like a bowl of *satsuki* rice porridge with Santa Barbara uni after an afternoon spent with Chris Burden and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

## Badmaash

This Indian restaurant, the first of two from chef Pawan Mahendro and his sons Nakul and Arjun, feels loft-like and almost Modernist, with giant Warholian portraits of Gandhi in Ray-Bans on the walls and a playlist that's more Coachella than Bollywood. The menu blends both contemporary and nostalgic approaches, with a glorious iteration of butter chicken and plates of Goan pork curry sharing the tables with chili cheese naan and chicken tikka poutine.

108 W. 2nd St., No. 104, Los Angeles, (213) 221-7466, [badmaashla.com/badmaash-dtla](http://badmaashla.com/badmaash-dtla)

## Bar Clacson

Bar Clacson is another project from bartender Eric Alperin and partners, whose downtown speakeasy the Varnish is now a decade old. It's a deceptive place, fronted by a tiny daytime sandwich and appetizer shop called E Stretto, with a long bocce pit running down the side of a bar that features a lot of amaros. In the back room and upstairs is a second bar called

the Slipper Clutch that Alperin calls "our rock 'n' roll highball bar." There are pinball machines, video games, pool and foosball tables, a playlist of New York hardcore bands, and a drinks menu of highballs made from sodas made in-house.

351 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, (213) 265-7477, [barclacson.com](http://barclacson.com)

## Grand Central Market

The Grand Central food hall has been open continuously for over 100 years, changing vendors and regional styles of foods throughout the decades but remaining a food hub for both downtown residents and visitors. Among the many current stalls are those that specialize in Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Mexican and Middle Eastern food. There are a cheesemonger, an artisanal bread baker, a Jewish deli, a vegan ramen shop, a fried chicken stall and a beer bar, as well as the seemingly permanent line for Eggslut.

317 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, [grandcentralmarket.com](http://grandcentralmarket.com)

## Kasih

Open for about a year on a busy Little Tokyo corner, Kasih is an Indonesian restaurant that specializes in modern takes on traditional dishes. The place skews young, with televisions and a bar and a menu that pairs well with drinks. There are fiery bowls of sambal, the spicy dips that infiltrate most of the cooking; bowls of sumptuous curry, and skewers to pair with more of those sauces. Executive chef Vindex Tengker is a veteran of restaurants in Bali and Jakarta, and chef de cuisine Zachary Hamel trained in Thailand and New York: You can see their itinerary on their plates.

200 S. Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, (213) 266-8156, [kasih.la](http://kasih.la)

## La Cita Bar

Next door to Grand Central Market is an old bar that looks more like a souvenir stand than the popular Mexican dance hall that it is. The dimly lit interior is hung with Christmas lights, as is the large "El Patio" in the back, which is covered with red awnings. The bar has been around for more than 60 years, catering to locals who come for the history and the music, the drinks and the dancing. There are happy hours devoted to hip-hop and rockabilly, Bloody Marys and punk rock.

336 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, (213) 687-7111, [lacitabar.com](http://lacitabar.com)

## Maccheroni Republic

Tucked away off Broadway is a cozy Italian trattoria that feels like a hidden enclave. The inside is a small brick-and-wood dining room with a tiny European-style bar; outside is a leafy patio with plenty of seating. The pasta that is the centerpiece of the menu — agnolotti filled with osso buco and marrow; pappardelle with lamb ragu — is all made by hand in the kitchen behind the bar. As you sit outside under a red umbrella with a bottle of wine and antipasto of Parma prosciutto, spicy 'nduja crostini and house-made giardiniera, waiting for your plates of pasta, it seems like the place has been there decades longer than its seven years.

332 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, (213) 346-9725, [maccheronirepublic.com](http://maccheronirepublic.com)

## Orsa & Winston

The most formal of chef Josef Centeno's cluster of downtown restaurants, Orsa & Winston is what happens when a chef synthesizes elements of two disparate culinary traditions (Japanese and Italian) into a playful tasting menu project. (Sonoran lamb with haricots verts and olives might follow *satsuki* rice porridge with uni and abalone.) There's also a weekend brunch that includes Japanese breakfast and a snack menu that pairs arancini with katsu. There's a list of





Italian wines, and on Sundays a Japanese tea service.

122 W. 4th St., Los Angeles, (213) 687-0300, [orsaandwinston.com](http://orsaandwinston.com)

## Otium

Chef Tim Hollingsworth, a longtime veteran of the French Laundry, has created a restaurant that operates like a mash-up of fine dining and street food. Elevated dishes such as branzino with soubise and truffles, and dry-aged duck with morels and rhubarb coexist nicely with homey falafel and tzatziki, and naan with whipped lardo. There are a vertical wine room next to a massive open kitchen, a garden upstairs, and a few fire pits out on the patio; the gorgeous, light-filled dining room fits in neatly next door to the Broad museum.

222 S. Hope St., Los Angeles, (213) 935-8500, [otiumla.com](http://otiumla.com)

## Patina

Joachim Spichal's flagship restaurant has been in its current location since 2003 (the original Hollywood spot opened in 1989), built inside the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Frank Gehry's beautiful musical spaceship. It's an old-school, fine-dining restaurant, with various tasting menus from executive chef Andreas Roller. It has an extensive wine list; a traditional cheese cart; menu variations for vegetarians, caviar lovers and theater goers; and even a water menu. If you miss the sedate charm of wine pairings, fancy supplements and boxes of after-dinner mignardises, or if you want a swank dining experience before a Gustavo Dudamel concert, this is the place to go.

141 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, (213) 972-3331, [patinagroup.com/patina-restaurant](http://patinagroup.com/patina-restaurant)

## Redbird

Carved out of the former rectory of what was once St. Vibiana's Cathedral, Redbird may be one of the prettiest restaurants in Los Angeles. Chef Neal Fraser has fashioned a menu that combines classic California cooking with global elements, adding a live fire component — there's a big grill in the patio, under a retractable roof through which you can see the bell tower — and sourcing produce from the restaurant's own garden. So you'll find duck with hoja santa tamales, house-cured sardines, Thai-style crab soup and a chicken pot pie. And with a marble bar in the patio and an excellent cocktail program, it's a fantastic place for drinks.

114 E. 2nd St., Los Angeles, (213) 788-1191, [redbird.la](http://redbird.la)

Los Angeles Times photos on previous page:  
top, Christina House; left, Ricardo DeAratana; right, Allen J. Schaben

Los Angeles Times photos on this page:  
top, Ricardo DeAratana; left, Mariah Tauger; right, Spencer Weiner



The Union Bank Building rises over Bunker Hill and its remaining Victorian houses in 1966.



# It once was a neighborhood. Then progress came to town

## Bunker Hill is again 'revitalized' via a major development

By CAROLINA A. MIRANDA

In an early scene from "The Exiles," Kent MacKenzie's moody 1961 film about the lives of a group of indigenous people living in Los Angeles midway through the 20th century, a young woman carries a bag of groceries up a hillside street flanked by weathered Victorian houses converted into apartments and boarding houses.

The shot is sumptuous: a play on shadow and light and the geometries of the once-graceful homes that lined the streets of L.A.'s Bunker Hill. "The Exiles," as Times film critic Kenneth Turan noted in a 2008 review, "captured a brooding picture of a darkly beautiful, long-gone Los Angeles."

Indeed, that Los Angeles is long gone. Clay Street, the narrow thoroughfare where Yvonne Williams, the young Apache woman who serves as the film's heart, was seen carting her goods, no longer exists. Neither do any of the Victorian buildings that once lined the street. Like the rest of old Bunker Hill, the street was demolished during an infamous pique of 1960s "slum clearance" policies that saw the entire neighborhood leveled to raw earth.

Today, the sliver of Clay Street where MacKenzie filmed subtly alluring scenes is occupied by Angel's Knoll, the shuttered, unkempt park that occupies a patch of steep hillside at Grand Avenue and 4th Street. On a recent afternoon, one of its more remote corners was inhabited by a gaunt man slipping into an opioid nod.

All of this lies just a couple of blocks over from Grand, where two internationally famous museums — the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Broad — stand alongside several performance complexes, including the Music Center, Disney Hall, the Colburn School and REDCAT, all representing different eras of Bunker Hill revitalization.

Indeed, every few years it seems that a major civic or commercial development opens atop Bunker Hill, leading to ample media coverage. The Music Center, which opened in stages, starting in 1964 — around the same time the city was bulldozing the last boarding houses that sheltered elderly and immigrants — has been described as the project that "commenced the revitalization of Bunker Hill."

When Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall opened on Grand Avenue in 2003, it was described as "the centerpiece of revitalization." Eli Broad once described his ambitions to transform Grand Avenue into "the Champs-Élysées of Los Angeles" — "which may have been an exaggeration," he later said.

Now as construction begins on Gehry's new Grand Avenue project — a mixed-use retail and residential complex that will occupy the dour parking lot that has, for years, sat across from Disney Hall — there is renewed chatter about "revitalization."

But what does it mean to "revitalize" something that we had a hand in extinguishing? Bunker Hill was a vital neighborhood that was dismembered by city, state and federal policies, then reassembled into corporate superblocks by private developers.

The neighborhood's roots took hold when a pair of early moguls acquired much of the land in the 1860s. By the late 19th century, the neighborhood was a bastion of the well-to-do. In the early 20th century, as more fashionable districts emerged west of downtown, the wealthy moved with them. By the 1920s, Bunker Hill had transitioned into a lively working-class neighborhood.

Rather than improve the lot of the working poor who inhabited the area — 1 in 5 of whom were foreign-born, primarily in Mexico, according to the U.S. census — the city set out to get rid of them.

The path for Bunker Hill's ultimate undoing was set with the 1949 federal Housing Act, which allowed for a looser use of eminent domain. In 1959, the City Council voted for the Bunker Hill renewal project that would "keep our city from slipping backward, like San Francisco and New York in the population race."

Within a decade, the last Victorian mansions on Bunker Hill were carted off to Heritage Square, where they promptly succumbed to arson.

The rebuild took decades — and is underway still.

When critical theorist Norman Klein came from New York to Los Angeles in the early 1970s, he thought Bunker Hill felt "very bald"

— "like a person who has a big bald patch and a big fat head ... like some of the architecture there is trying to cover up the bald spot."

Certainly it's an architecture that is trying to compensate for something.

To walk the length of Grand Avenue, from Temple to 5th Street, is to immerse yourself in a tour of the monumental: Rafael Moneo's cathedral (a medieval Spanish castle rendered contemporary), Gehry's Disney Hall (an ebullient sailing ship) and Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Broad museum (aka the cheese grater).

It is also to immerse yourself in corporate development projects that are actively hostile to the street, impassive glass towers whose policed private-public spaces lie above or below grade — impervious to happy accident, human scale or the sight of a half-naked hippie playing the bongos.

As Mike Davis describes its structures in "City of Quartz": It is "a Miesian skyscape raised to dementia."

This makes it a curious location for L.A.'s most important cultural hub. Culture is often at its most dynamic when it is pushing boundaries, cropping up unexpectedly in in-between spaces. The design of Grand Avenue, with its string of large-scale institutions, has left little room for this.

Not that there aren't moments of L.A. scrapiness. But culture on Grand Avenue is largely top-down. And this has overwritten a place where ideas once bubbled up. Could a budding John Fante peck out his novel on today's Bunker Hill? Probably not.

The quaint Angels Flight funicular, which opened in 1901 and ran alongside the 3rd Street tunnel, once connected residents of Bunker Hill to the city below. After redevelopment, it was relocated a few hundred feet to the southwest and now hauls office workers to the Postmodern corporate plazas on Grand Avenue — a relic from another era, its original significance and purpose lost.

In "The Exiles," there is a scene where the camera settles on a bar called El Progreso — "The Progress." Progress can be a curious thing. Progress for some can mean erasure for others. Like the old Bunker Hill, El Progreso is also gone.



A rendering of the Grand development. Designed by Frank Gehry, it will have a hotel, residential tower, shopping, dining and a public plaza.

# Still searching for a sense of community

Can big names and big money make the Grand a great place for everyone?

By SAM LUBELL

**A**fter more than 15 years, the Grand — the final piece of Bunker Hill's transformative Grand Avenue Project — is finally showing signs of life.

According to current plans, the \$1-billion-plus development, designed by Frank Gehry and developed by Related Cos. and set directly across the street from Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall, will, by 2021, contain a residential tower, a hotel, 27,000 square feet of shopping and dining, and a public plaza that spills onto Grand Avenue.

Gehry, as is his specialty, has sketched riotous buildings that dialogue with his billowing concert hall, stirring up magnetic energy and stepping down to the street like slightly off-kilter play blocks. The 20-story Equinox Hotel will be clad in gleaming metal, like Disney, with a staggered pattern of windowpanes. The 39-story residential tower will have a more conventional facade, composed of precast concrete panels punched with windows and lightened in sections with glass corners. In between these bookends, the stepped, horseshoe-shaped plaza will be lined with glossy retail spaces.

Related Senior Vice President Rick Vogel calls this approach, softened in places with trees and other landscaping, an "urban room," connected to the street and filled with benches, pathways, stairs, bridges, art, graphics, open-air dining and space for live performances. Its centerpiece is a huge crinkled glass and bent-steel fish sculpture on the second level, designed by Gehry.

Gehry describes the design process as a kind of "gerrymandering," in which he carved away at his initial design and the developer's strict design formulas to create what he believes is a more public-oriented project.

"It took us some time to understand each other," says Gehry, who pushed for opening views to the concert hall across the street and creating a busy, egalitarian outdoor experience.

Another major victory for the architect was opening the plaza eastward to Olive Street, allowing for a winding, downhill cityscape that will probably connect to yet another Gehry project — a planned extension of the Colburn School containing new performance venues, classrooms and student housing.

The Grand Avenue Project, first pursued by a city and county body called the Grand Avenue Joint Powers Authority, includes land parcels on either side of upper Grand Avenue.



Previous page and above: Related-CORE

Whereas the Grand has long been held up by financing issues, the other sites have been built out with projects that include Arquitectonica's \$120-million Emerson apartment tower and Rios Clementi Hale's \$50-million Grand Park.

Staring at this avalanche of design talent and funding begs the same question you can ask for the area at large: Can big names and big money make the Grand, and Grand Avenue in general, a great civic place?

The question is particularly relevant on the heels of Related Cos.' most recent urban effort, New York's Hudson Yards, which has been widely criticized as a placeless fortress for the elite. Both Gehry and Related are adamant that their efforts will be more effective. Their work so far seems promising, but there are reasons to be concerned.

There is no doubt that Gehry's designs will draw people to the Grand and encourage them to stay. And thanks in part to requirements set by the Joint Powers Authority, the development should be more connected and egalitarian than Hudson Yards.

The housing tower, like the Emerson, will contain 20% affordable housing (apartments reserved for those making less than the state's median income), and the retail and restaurants will interact with the street and, according to Related, will contain offerings aimed for a mix range of incomes and cultures. The same authority bargained for Related to fund Grand Park — thus far the Grand Avenue Project's biggest victory in terms of promoting civic life. Vogel says his company — and a commit-

tee of representatives from local companies and institutions — hopes to channel that park's energy into the grounds in and around the Grand, through, for instance, projections onto Disney Hall, outdoor concerts and street festivals.

Yet the Grand, despite its high aspirations and positive achievements, appears to be a development for the very rich. In order for formulas that Gehry mentioned to pencil out, its exterior surfaces will surely be cheaper than those inside its luxury lodgings and commercial boutiques. (The hotel's metallic wall, for instance, is painted aluminum, not the stainless steel employed at Disney.)

It seems likely that the more affordable restaurants and shops will play second fiddle to the lucrative brands and "celebrity-chef-driven concepts," as Vogel puts them. Parking will be under the building, encouraging visitors to stay on the property, not explore the area. These types of inevitable corporate demands are what keep even the best-intentioned developer projects from becoming true civic projects.

Despite its recent triumphs, particularly Grand Park and the Broad, the thoroughfare's overall streetscape and pedestrian environment is still woefully underdeveloped. Although the street's biggest booster, Eli Broad, once said Grand Avenue was going to be the Champs-Élysées of Los Angeles (he said years later that he "misspoke"), upper Grand hardly contains any of that Parisian street's trees, planters, active storefronts, porous building

edges, street furniture, sculpture, public transit, public amenities and pedestrian activity. And thanks to plans implemented decades ago, its mix of uses still lacks the variety that a vibrant cityscape needs.

The city is now mandating that developers liven up the streetscapes around new projects here, but that won't affect the (largely moribund) areas in front of existing buildings. Gehry is attempting to provide some assistance, he says, discussing with Related and city officials the idea of installing more food and beverage offerings on Disney's ground floor and stimulating the area around it with urban furniture, performance spaces and still more eating and drinking options, including a crystalline bar.

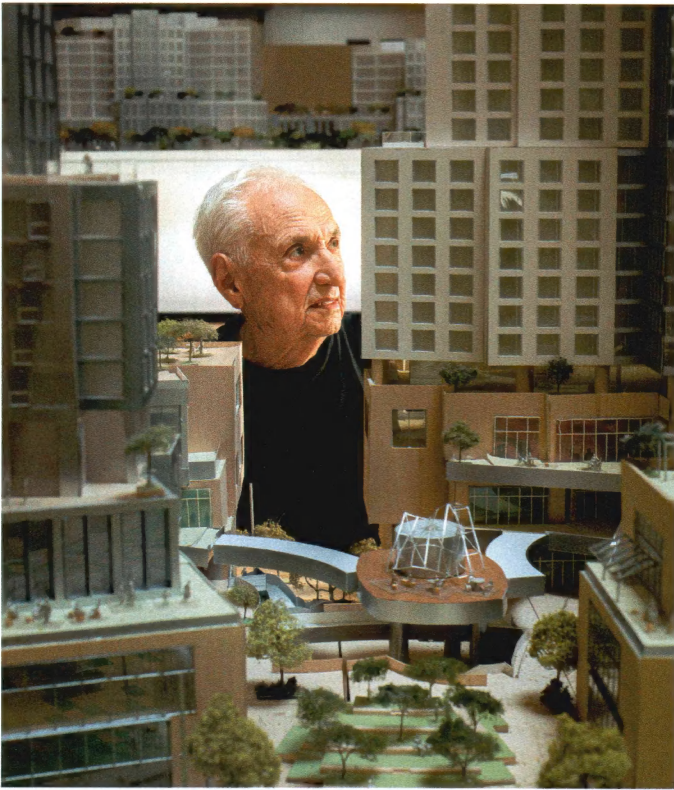
"So far everybody is saying the right things," he says, adding, "I don't think special has to be expensive."

Gehry, who has taken a keen interest in urban-scale projects around the city later in his career, is right about that. In addition to a revamped pedestrian infrastructure, what this street full of elite institutions, elite residents and big-name architecture is missing most of all is some of the cheap, nimble, ad hoc urbanism — murals, pocket parks, swap meets, guerrilla furniture, food trucks, pop-up shops and so much more — that makes Los Angeles such a weird, special place.

"It's about putting fingers on that community," says Gehry, who first rose to fame employing just this kind of design. That, after all, is what a civic space is all about.

# Imagining a destination for all

Observers hope the cultural corridor will connect to every demographic



## Frank Gehry

Frank Gehry is the architect of the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Grand, a mixed-use development — with a hotel, residences and shops — scheduled to open across the street from the hall in 2021.

### Can you talk about the significance of Grand Avenue?

I think that what has been missing on Grand Avenue is nightlife. When many people drive halfway across the city to get to a concert or museum, they would like to maybe have dinner or stay late.

The hope for the Grand is that it will be kind of the grease on the wheels of culture, that it will bring about all that activity. It may also provide the possibility of projecting concerts on Disney Hall [which was part of the original plans for the building], since that could be a major attraction for the new restaurants, where people could watch. I think that will happen.

### What about the future?

What's interesting is that the new halls [Gehry is designing] for

the Colburn [School] are going to be down the hill on 2nd Street. The connections now are going east rather than south, and that makes more sense to me. If you look at what's available east, you've got Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Olvera Street. And with this you've got the beginnings of a population that we all hope we can connect to.

[Going east] leads you right to the Geffen Contemporary, which is about to have a renaissance, and then to the Los Angeles River [the full length of which is Gehry's major urban renewal project], where we're proposing a big water park. It would be like an Indian step well in reverse, a place to store water — one month wet, 11 months dry. Man, if we can pull that off, it would change the whole city.

— Mark Swed

## Richard Koshalek

Richard Koshalek was chief curator and deputy director of the Museum of Contemporary Art from 1980-82 and museum director from 1982-99.

### Can you talk about the significance of Grand Avenue?

When we built MOCA, there was nothing around it. And since there was commitment for some kind of art function to California Plaza, we first started a "guerrilla" museum, with the idea of art as guerrilla warfare. We closed Grand Avenue for [L.A. choreographer] Rudy Perez, invited [L.A. performance artist] Rachel Rosenthal to create a work on the parking lot of the Water and Power building, and had performances on the loading dock of the Mark Taper Forum. The idea was to bring a certain kind of creative energy to Grand Avenue even before the museum was built.

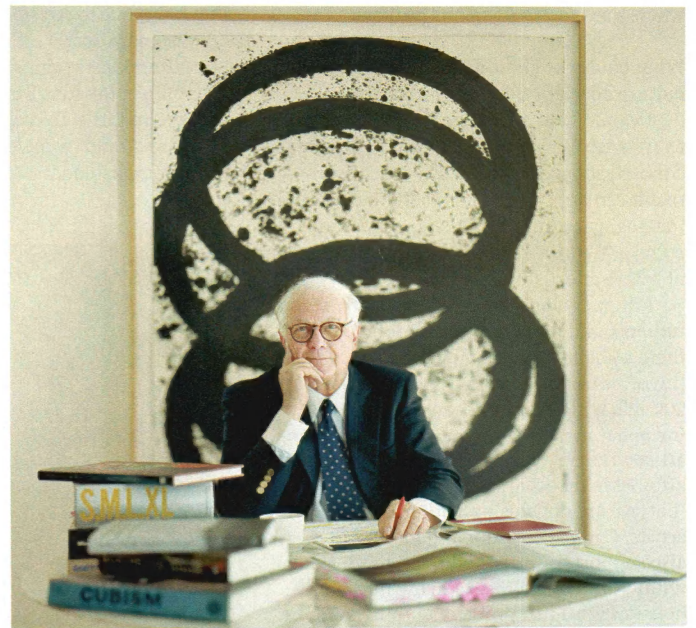
### What about the future?

When I chaired the competition for an architect for Walt Disney Concert Hall, initially we wanted to remake all of Grand [Avenue], and Frank Gehry's hall and his designs for the Grand across the street — which were always to be part of the project —

have helped do that for sure. But nobody has thought seriously about what Grand Avenue should be as a major public space. We use the wrong examples when we look to European models. Los Angeles is not Paris. We need to come up with our own ideas, be aspirational.

The reason Gehry won the Disney Hall competition is because he understood both L.A. the city and the L.A. Phil. Now we need to do the same for the street, which we've forgotten. What if [L.A. Mayor] Eric Garcetti became our Napoleon III and sponsored a competition to find the brightest minds who could design a public space appropriate to our climate, transportation needs and culture? We could commission landscape artists and use Lower Grand for new kinds of art installations. In thinking about the future, L.A. has to have a continuous confidence to come up with designs not modeled on any other city, and then build them.

— Mark Swed



Photographs by Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times



Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times

## Catherine Opie

Fine-art photographer Catherine Opie is a member of the board of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

### What role does Grand Avenue play in the cultural landscape of Los Angeles?

I've been living in L.A. since '85, and I've watched downtown go through moments of "Yes!" And then, "Crash." But I think that the most interesting thing, in terms of the cultural corridor now, is they actually have a population to support the arts, which is very different than how [it was].

With L.A. [so spread out], there was always the question of: "How do you get the Westside downtown?" And now, it comes downtown because of everything that has been built in relationship to the cultural corridor. And that even includes Staples Center in my mind. That allows another demographic to come downtown where they go, "Oh, I wanna be down here."

### What could, or should, the Grand Avenue culture corridor be going forward?

I would like to see it grow in relationship to affordability, to a certain extent. My biggest concern about allowing a city to truly grow is that it can't only grow for a certain economic [demographic] in relationship to art and culture. We have to allow for [the development of] more affordable housing.

I think it would be interesting, as art institutions build these fantastic buildings, that there somehow be a component of it that [involves] affordable housing, [to allow for] 20% of a building to be occupied by low-income renters or even purchasers. I was an artist who moved to L.A. because it was more affordable than San Francisco or New York, [but] we are now losing a younger group of artists. Can the corridor and the arts initiative also support the artists who want to live here within this community? I'm talking about housing. It's a real problem within our city.

—Deborah Vankin

## Paul Schimmel

Paul Schimmel was chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art from 1990-2012.

### What's the cultural significance of the Grand Avenue corridor? What does it add to the city?

The Grand Avenue corridor, like the Wilshire corridor, began with really large institutional anchors: LACMA [on Wilshire] and the Music Center [downtown]. They represented a kind of '60s vision of an area.

It's now a destination, both for the community and ... [tourists]. And the more elements that are there, the greater the critical mass is. Big, institutional, not-for-profits — libraries, music halls, museums — this is what they've done very well. But it's in some ways the random things that you don't plan for that make the whole community of Grand Avenue come to life. I think what has happened in the gallery world over in Chinatown, and downtown, and now the Arts District, all of the smaller and medium-sized not-for-profits and commercial ventures, have brought a far richer, far more diverse program [to the area].

### How could the Grand Avenue area be more fully realized?

I think MOCA has tried over the years, and I know the city has talked about over the years, different ways of trying to connect Grand Avenue, which still feels in some ways corporate, a little isolated on top of the hill, a little hard to get to. It doesn't have the kind of walking community the Arts District has. And thinking about trying to connect these two very different-in-feeling but geographically-so-close communities would be something that would be a good mix.... I think art that literally connects those two communities — we need far more public art. Compared to so many other cities, Los Angeles doesn't connect the dots and art in the best way.

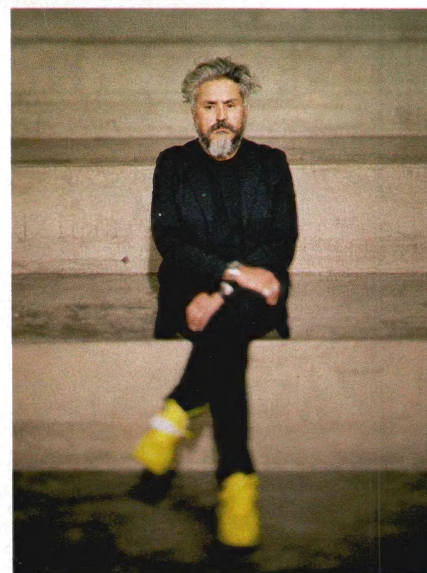
### So what might that look like on Grand Avenue?

I'd like to see smaller and medium-sized places up on the hill — galleries, not-for-profits, cultural institutions, music. I think trying to connect the Arts District from 7th all the way over to Little Tokyo, up through Grand Park and up to Grand Avenue, this would be a great accomplishment.

—Deborah Vankin



Michael Nagle For The Times



Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times

## Hernan Diaz Alonso

Hernan Diaz Alonso is director and CEO of the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

### What role do you see Grand Avenue playing in the cultural landscape of Los Angeles?

It has been an evolution. I moved here in 2001. Disney Hall was still under construction; the cathedral was still under construction. Today, you have almost all aspects of the city here, from religion to education to leisure to art. It has become a hub of culture, and you have it all compressed into three or four blocks, all world-class institutions, with programming that is very open-minded and progressive.

### Design-wise, what has been key to having this area play a more significant role in the city's life?

All of these institutions have done a good job of making many things available to the public — the Broad with the garden outside, and MOCA with the plaza. But I consider Disney Hall a masterpiece — and not just because of the design, but the attitude. As a building, Disney said, "We need to engage the city. We need to engage people. We don't need fortresses anymore." Gehry prioritized the pedestrian in an era in which the typical L.A. building still privileged the car.

### How would you like to see Grand Avenue evolve in the future?

Grand Avenue is a dream of Modernism. It is elevated, it is still car-centric. L.A. needs more density, and the area needs a little more messiness, more hybrids, more life. It will need to mutate and evolve. So, hopefully, the Grand Avenue project they are doing in front of Disney Hall is the first step. My aspiration is that these institutions become a part of everyday life. But in order to do that, the city needs to grow up around it.

—Carolina A. Miranda

## Christopher Hawthorne

Christopher Hawthorne, chief design officer for the city of Los Angeles, was an architecture critic at the Los Angeles Times from 2004-18.

### What role does Grand Avenue play in the cultural landscape of Los Angeles?

For a long time I've been of two minds about the larger cultural significance of Grand Avenue. Seen from a certain angle it would be almost impossible to overstate its importance for American architecture and urbanism. It's not just that there are prominent buildings by Arata Isozaki, Elizabeth Diller, Frank Gehry, Welton Becket, Wolf Prix and Rafael Moneo lined up in a tidy row.

In a broader sense, Bunker Hill has been a petri dish for urban-planning theory for more than a century, a place where early suburbanization gave way to an aggressive urban-renewal campaign and more recently to investments in transit, green space and infill development, and a big bet on the power of celebrity architecture. That complicated history, though, has made Grand Avenue something of a sinkhole for the attention of city officials, arts patrons and newspaper editors. Relative to other parts of the city, we've given it more public subsidy and private largesse than seems equitable. We've also written and argued about it endlessly, thanks in part to close connections between Times leadership and Bunker Hill that go back to the days of "Buff" Chandler and the birth of the Music Center.

### What role can it play ... what role should it play ... in the future?

The experiments in urban planning and evolving models of patronage that have shaped

Grand Avenue have left us with a peculiar artifact with plenty of 21st-century potential. Precisely because it is more Frankenstein's monster than traditional neighborhood, Grand Avenue is a place where forward-looking architecture and urban design might continue to take root. And so even as we try to steer clear of the hubris that marked the city planning theories of the postwar decades, it would be a mistake to seal Grand Avenue as it exists now in amber in the name of penance or newfound caution. That would have the effect of enshrining the very mistakes — top-down, car-oriented planning and the displacement of residents, to name the biggest — that urban renewal wrought.

A new tower planned at the base of the Angels Flight funicular, Frank Gehry's expansion of the Colburn School and the redesign of the Music Center plaza by Rios Clementi Hale Studios will continue the long process of filling in and activating the giant gaps opened by those 1950s planning decisions.

Looking ahead, our focus should be twofold: finding sites on Bunker Hill for a significant new supply of affordable housing (near or above the forthcoming Metro Regional Connector station on Hope Street would be one place to consider) and rethinking the pedestrian and mobility experience from the sidewalk up, so that the space between the famous buildings becomes as compelling as the buildings themselves.

— Alice Short



Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times



Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times

## Helen Leung

Helen Leung is co-executive director of LA-Más, a nonprofit urban design organization that focuses on lower-income and underserved communities.

### What role does Grand Avenue play in the cultural landscape of Los Angeles?

Grand Avenue has this amazing role to play in terms of serving as a civic spine to downtown Los Angeles. What I appreciate most about Grand Avenue and its civic institutions is its diversity in programming, especially its level of inclusivity and price points.

### What role should Grand Avenue play in the future?

It would be wonderful to have a first-class civic street that is, in its broadest sense, inclusive. *That* is the issue for Los Angeles: How can you channel these projects and institutions into a space where everyone feels welcome, so everyone feels art and culture is something for them and not just for someone who has money?

California recently decriminalized street vending. Los Angeles is still working on a system for street vendors. Will Grand Avenue welcome street vendors in the future? And what about affordable housing? As someone who is a child of working-class immigrants and co-runs an organization that is trying to explore affordable housing, [it] should definitely be included on Grand, especially when there is public money or public land is involved.

— Alice Short

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